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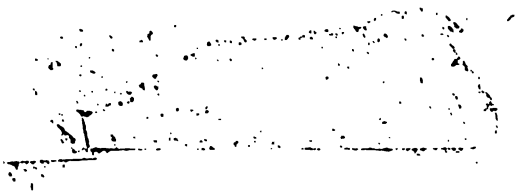
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(OTHERS IN THE PRESS.)

THE ADVENTURES OF A BLOCKADE RUNNER, OR, TRADE IN TIME OF WAR

BY WILLIAM WATSON,
AUTHOR OF "LIFE IN THE CONFEDERATE ARMY"

ILLUSTRATED BY CAPTAIN BYNG, R.N

LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN,
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PREFACE.



HERE are few instances in modern times where the exigencies of war so much barred the free run of intercourse and paralyzed trade and commerce as the blockading of the Southern ports during the American Civil War, or where such inducements were offered to break through the barrier by what was called blockade running.

The writer has neither the knowledge nor the capability to attempt to write anything like a history or treatise on this subject; he therefore confines himself to a brief detail of his own acts and experience, and what came under his own observation.

The idea of blockade running during that war has been generally depicted by swift steamers running into Charleston and other ports in the Atlantic States, and it was there that it was chiefly carried on during the earlier part of the war when the blockade was somewhat inefficient.

It has also been supposed by some that the danger of capture lay only in passing through the blockading fleet while entering or leaving a port, and that beyond the limits of the blockaded port no danger existed; this was a mistaken idea.

As the war progressed, the naval force of the United States was greatly augmented. The seas were patrolled by cruisers, and the blockaded ports became fewer in number as they were successively captured and occupied by the United States forces; and during the latter part of the war, the traffic was confined almost exclusively to the Gulf of Mexico and the

States bordering on its shores; and it was there carried on with great activity till the very end of the war, in the face of a powerful blockading fleet and numerous cruisers, which overhauled and seized anywhere at sea, all vessels to which they thought any suspicion might attach.

Hence the traffic was then attended with more difficulty and risk; captures were more frequent, and the whole business more hazardous and exciting.

In connection with the traffic in the Gulf there was one feature which has been very little noticed: this was the great amount of blockade running which was done by small sailing vessels.

On the shores of the Gulf States there were many rivers and inlets, the entrances to which were generally blocked by shallow bars or shoals, which could only be entered by vessels of light draught of water. These entrances were largely taken advantage of by what were called centre-board schooners—a class of vessels much in use at that time in these parts.

Although one or more war vessels generally lay off these entrances or inlets, they could not, on account of the shallow water, get sufficiently close to effectually block the passage in and out of these small craft by night, therefore a strict look-out was kept for them outside: and, in order to suppress the traffic, a number of patrolling vessels cruised along the coast and over the Gulf, with the view of picking them up at sea.

The shallow waters of these ports also confined the traffic to vessels of small class, and these had to run to neutral ports in Mexico, Cuba, or elsewhere, which made their occupation somewhat adventurous. Often very heavily overladen, they had, besides the risk of passing the blockading vessels, the dangers of a long sea voyage, throughout the whole of which they were liable to be picked up by the United States cruisers; and winter being the chosen time, on account of shorter daylight and better winds, they often encountered heavy gales, and being in constant dread of capture, they were often driven along with extreme recklessness.

The writer through force of circumstances brought on by the war was in a measure compelled to engage in this hazardous business, and had some experience in this small-craft traffic

and afterwards in steamers, as well as in some of the less pleasing incidents of business in the war time.

He has still in his possession many papers and memoranda of business and other events, as well as remnants of his log-books; and in now publishing this little account of his experience, he trusts the public will excuse the many defects in his composition, as he has no pretensions to literary abilities, but endeavours to relate, in a plain, blunt way, events just as they happened. And if those who may take the trouble to read through these pages should find anything to interest or amuse them, his object will be attained.

WILLIAM WATSON.

January, 1892.



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THE ADVENTURES
OF
A BLOCKADE RUNNER.

CHAPTER I.

A country distracted by war—Effects of a blockade—Getting away from the turmoil—The schooner *Rob Roy*—Description of centre-board vessel.

IT was in the early part of the year 1863, when the Civil War in America was at its height, and the extensive fields, prairies, and forests in the Southern States had become one gigantic battle-field, and the noble rivers—on whose waters three years before magnificent steamers had been plying up and down, embarking and disembarking their freights and passengers at the numerous thriving towns and villages along the fertile banks—were now unruffled except by grim-looking war vessels armed with heavy guns, whose frowning muzzles threatened destruction to the almost deserted towns along the shores.

Over the whole length and breadth of the land all commercial industries, business pursuits, and even pleasures and enjoyments, were suppressed by the authority and din of war.

Shut off from communication with the outer world, and surrounded by a hostile force, the whole country might be com-

pared to one vast besieged garrison, where but one object was paramount, that of resistance to the enemy, and the will of the commander the only law, and the only liberty such as he chose to grant.

The Northern States, with a view of crushing the South into obedience, had, with a powerful fleet, blockaded every Southern port, and completely shut off the Southern States from all communication with other nations.

These States, being entirely agricultural, little attention had been given to manufacturing industries within themselves; they had hitherto almost entirely depended upon the export of their stable products, to supply in return, by way of imports, all articles of foreign manufacture or production necessary for their use. When therefore the blockade was in force, the effect caused by the shutting off of these imports was severely felt.

While the want of munitions of war hampered the combatants, and the want of other necessaries of life caused great privation and suffering among the inhabitants generally, within these blockaded and beleaguered States, the want of their products, particularly cotton, also began to be much felt by other nations.

Previous to the outbreak of hostilities, these States had been the world's chief source of the cotton supply, in the production of which they almost held a monopoly. And thus when that supply was stopped the consequences were severely felt throughout the large manufacturing districts in Europe and the Northern States.

Factories were closed from want of raw material and thousands of operatives thrown out of employment.

Throughout the world there was a great dearth of this article, and this era will long be remembered for the cotton famine which caused much distress among the working classes, the price, as may be imagined, having reached an enormous figure; while, within those States, cotton was piled up in millions of bales a cumbersome drug, and the people were suffering severely from want of the very merchandise that other nations would gladly have supplied in exchange.

From month to month and from year to year did this state of matter continue.

The seas, which three years previously had been thickly studded with the white sails of shipping, were now deserted, and nearly as solitary as when discovered by Columbus.

Such being the state of affairs, it is obvious that attempts were not wanting to break through the cordon which caused misery and privation to so many, and which was, or could be, maintained by no other right than that accorded to sheer force of arms.

Standing guard over every port or inlet where any entrance could be effected were armed vessels, ready to dispute with shot and shell any attempt at entrance or egress, while in the open sea solitary cruisers might be seen occasionally on the look-out for, and ready to overhaul, search, and seize if they thought proper, any vessel which they thought suspicious, or which might dare to approach the guarded waters.

At rare times might be seen a steamer with low hull, painted so as to be scarcely distinguishable from the waves, speeding along at a rapid rate, to make a landfall about dusk, or lying near the offing with banked fires waiting for the cover of night to attempt to run through the blockading fleet. Also, at times, a small, low-hulled schooner might be observed making for some of the inland bays, shoals, or river mouths, into which she could retreat if chased by a cruiser.

It was about the time referred to—June, 1863—that a small, low-hulled schooner was making her way from these coasts and standing southward into the Gulf of Mexico. The mere existence of a vessel in these waters, particularly a vessel of that description, would have excited suspicion and would certainly have brought down upon her any United States cruiser had she been observed by them. But although her appearance and description was exactly the same as a blockade runner's, it was easy to see from the position she was in, from the course she was steering and the cargo she carried, that she was not at that time engaged in the business.

Her position was about sixty miles south of the mouth of the Mississippi river; which was the entrance to the port of New Orleans, and that city was then in the hands of the

Federal forces, and was not blockaded, but was under martial law, and all trade with it was restricted.

From the direction the vessel was steering, it was evident that she had come out from that port. She had a general or mixed cargo, and part of a deck-load of shingles.

It was blowing a stiff breeze, about S.S.E., and the vessel was close hauled on the port tack, which showed that she was bound for some port in Cuba, or that she intended to pass through the Yucatan Channel into the Caribbean Sea.

As this vessel is to occupy a prominent place in our narrative, and as she was of a kind seldom seen on the European side of the Atlantic, and until very recently comparatively unknown, we may here give a slight description of her.

She was called a centre-board boat, and since vessels of the kind have lately created a little sensation in yachting circles, we may give a rough sketch of their origin, construction, and utility, at least such of them as are employed in sea-going and cargo-carrying purposes.

Along the shores of the Southern States, particularly on the borders of the Gulf of Mexico, there are numerous land-locked bays, which are navigable to a considerable extent inland, as well as many rivers more or less navigable falling into the gulf. At the entrances to these bays and rivers there are generally bars of shallow water, which prevent the entrance of vessels of deep draught. To enable vessels of some size to enter, the plan of the centre-board was adopted.

Vessels of this kind are built in a particular way, and it is important that the proportions should be strictly observed. If this is done the vessel is stable and seaworthy; if not, she is dangerous.

The model of a vessel best adapted for sea-going purposes is of what is called the flat-sharp kind.

The rise in floor from keel to bilge, about one in six. The breadth of beam should never be less than three and a half times the depth of hold, or three times the total depth, and the length for sea-going purposes never to exceed four times the breadth of beam.

The keel, which must be of great breadth and strength, extends only a few inches below the planking of the bottom.

Up the centre of the keel, in a line straight fore and aft, is made a slot, of sufficient width to admit the centre-board, and as long as can be gained with convenience and safety. From the upper side of the keel this slot is cased round with strong planking, which is carried up to the deck beams, this forming a casing, or well, on which rests the deck beams. In this well works the centre-board, the breadth of which corresponds with the depth from the lower side of the deck beams to the bottom of the keel. It is rounded on the forward end, and at the extreme point a hole is made and a strong pivot bolt, passing through the casing, passes through the hole in the centre-board, and holds it there, allowing the after end to work up and down. This end is generally worked up and down by means of an iron bar with tackle attached, or other appliance. By means of this bar the centre-board is pushed out through the keel and forms a blade which holds up the vessel and prevents her going to leeward, which she would otherwise do on account of her flat bottom and light draught of water.

In a properly constructed centre-board vessel it is difficult to get as much side-resisting surface as in a sharp deep vessel, but there is a great advantage gained by that surface being more effective, by the vessel maintaining her perpendicular and not laying over so much on her side on a wind.

Such vessels may lose their masts, but, if of the proper proportions, it is very difficult for them to be thrown on their beam ends or capsized.

They are generally very weatherly, and have an advantage in plying to windward, as they go round quickly and in a small circle, and have so little keel. Moreover, the centre-board being short, acts as a pivot on which they turn, and when they are sailing free or off the wind, the centre-board is partly drawn up which lessens the friction. Their great utility however is in crossing bars and shoals where a deep vessel cannot go, as the centre-board can be drawn up and the draught of the vessel reduced to suit the depth of water, and then let down again as the water deepens.

They have, however, some disadvantages as sea-going vessels, the chief of which is their light hold on the water, which

causes then to swag more to leeward than a deep vessel when on a wind in a heavy sea: as it is then not prudent to put the centre-board full down, as with the heavy surging of the vessel to leeward the leverage of the centre-board might strain the casing and spring a leak, or the centre-board might be carried away. Their breadth of beam and light draught of water also throws upon their masts and rigging a quick and jerking motion when in a light wind with considerable sea, on which causes chafing and tear and wear of tackling. These vessels are peculiarly adapted for crossing the shallow bars which block the entrances to many of the inland bays and rivers on the coasts of the Southern States and Mexico, and also for the shoals and reefs of the Bahamas; and it is there that they are thoroughly understood, built, and navigated to perfection.

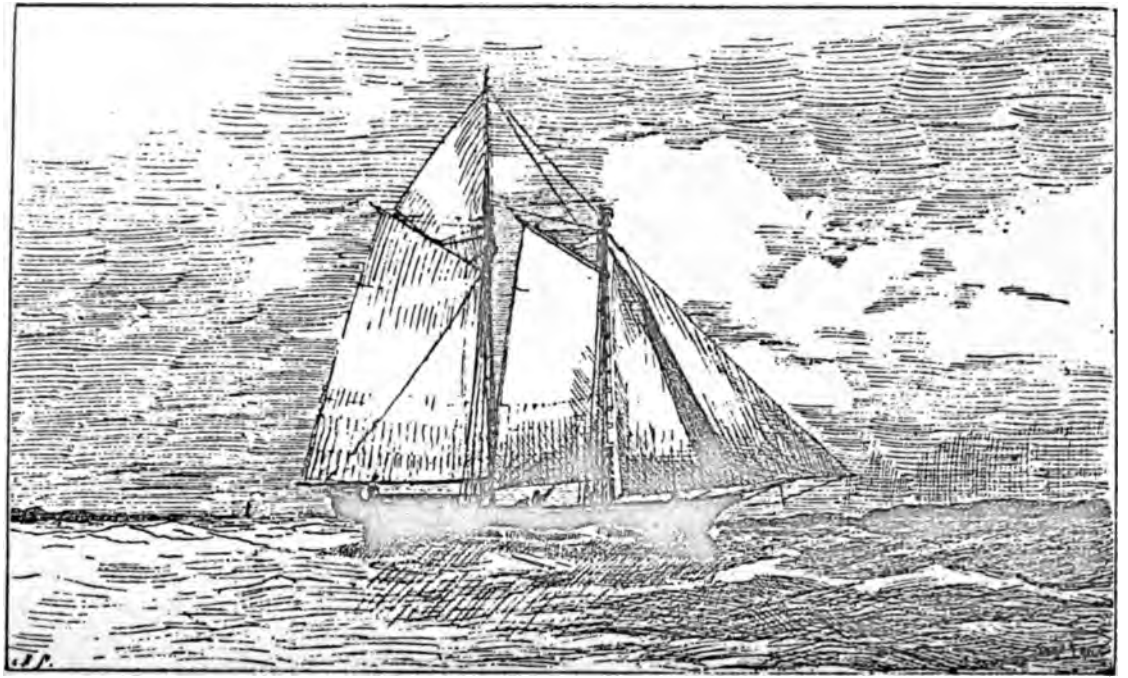
Of this class was the schooner now referred to.

She had the appearance of an ordinary trading schooner of the clipper build, with low bulwarks, tall masts, and large sails of heavy cotton canvas. Her length was about 78 feet, her breadth of beam about 22 feet 6 inches, and her depth of hold about 6 feet; her draught of water when loaded was about 4 feet 9 inches with centre-board up, and 13 feet with it down. The space between the fore and main masts was more than is generally seen in schooners on the European side of the Atlantic, the main mast being placed a little further aft, and the main boom projecting out a considerable length beyond the taffrail, thus allowing space for a larger foresail, and also affording space for the centre-board, which in a schooner is between the main and fore masts.

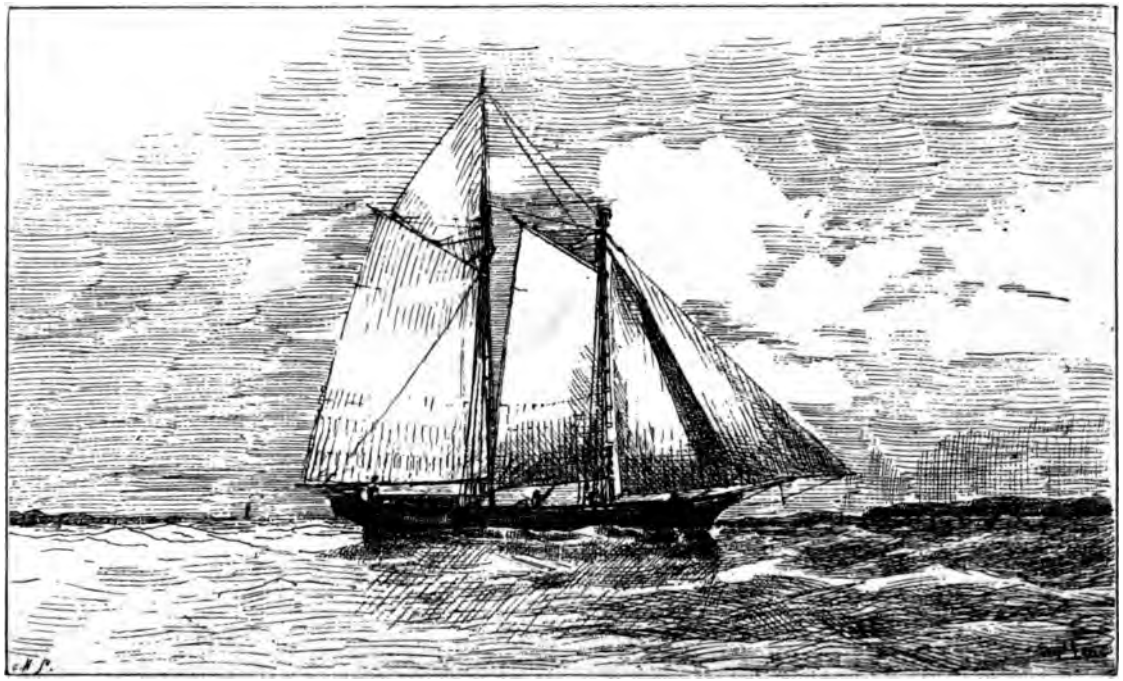
She had what is called a trunk cabin, which rose about two feet above the main deck, the entrance to which was by a companion stair facing the stern.

The name *Rob Roy* was newly painted upon her stern in neat letters, followed by some rather clumsy lettering, which looked liked "Balizehon," but which was intended for—of "Belize Honduras." The fact of these names being newly placed there showed that she had recently changed her name as well as her nationality.

She carried a crew of eight all told, being captain, mate, cook, cabin boy, and four seamen. There were besides, three



SCHOONER "ROB ROY."



SCHOONER "ROB ROY."

other persons on board, two of whom were passengers, the other was the owner and supercargo of the vessel.

As the person here last referred to undertakes to give a brief account of his adventures and the general mode of traffic with the Southern States during that exciting period, he may be permitted to tell his own story, with the full understanding that what he has to relate—be it ever so tame and commonplace—shall be facts and not fiction.

CHAPTER II.

The writer begins his narrative—The schooner boarded by the *Alabama*—Arrival at Belize, Honduras—American vessels changing their flag—Effects of the new American currency on the West Indian market—No market for cargo—Sails for the coast of Mexico—Finds there a large fleet of shipping—Reasons for the presence of the same.

ON imagining myself called upon to give a true and unimbellished account of my experience on the subject asked for in the conclusion of the preceding chapter, I feel that I might say, like the needy knife-grinder, "Story, God bless you, I have none to tell, sir." The rough, but honest outcast, seeing that he could not with truth relate a thrilling story of wrongs and oppressions such as the imaginative soul of the friend of humanity was longing to hear, honestly confessed that he had no story to tell except the truth, and as this was far from affording to his psuedo friend the gratification he desired, he no longer sympathized with, but reviled the outcast.

I have no story to relate of desperate daring, deeds of blood, and miraculous escapes; but I am obliged to give in a very plain fashion simply an accurate account of my trading and adventures in a small way in the Mexican Gulf during the American Civil War.

It was in the position of owner on board the schooner above referred to that I found myself after about ten years' residence in the Southern States, the last three years of which had been marked with considerable excitement and adventure.

The cause in which I had unwittingly, and somewhat unwillingly, got mixed up was now, I could see, hopeless, and the complete subjugation of the Southern States was only a question of time, and any prospects of continuing my business in those States as before the war I considered now impossible. To obtain any kind of civil employment was at this time out of the question. I had, therefore, invested in a small vessel, and after many seizures and detentions, had at last, by running from under the forts during the night, succeeded in getting away from the distracted country.

The tiny vessel and part of the cargo was my own, or to me consigned; the rest of the cargo was freight to be landed at the port of Belize, Honduras. The fulfilling of this part was what I had now in the first place to do, but what I should afterwards do was occupying my thoughts.

To sell the vessel and cargo was my first thought and desire, and then make an effort to follow my profession as an engineer in the West Indies or Mexico; this, however, I might not be able to effect, and my stirring and adventurous life during the last three years had somewhat unsettled me, and made the quiet routine of ordinary life less congenial to me.

To seafaring I was no stranger; I had served as a seaman, and while in the West Indies and other places had acquired considerable knowledge of the management of small vessels; I had also a fair nautical education, and considered myself a tolerable good navigator.

As I might however have had some difficulty in getting a crew and obtaining a clearance, I had retained in command of the vessel for a short time the captain who was in command of her when I purchased her, with the understanding that I might shortly sell her or take command of her myself.

There was little of interest in the voyage from New Orleans to Belize, and I set myself to observe strictly the sea-going and weatherly qualities of the vessel, learn thoroughly the management of her, and study the winds and currents of these seas.

The winds continued steady, but light, veering from S.S.E. to S., which kept us tacking until we reached the latitude of 23° N., when, the wind hauling more to the eastward, the vessel lay her course through the Yucatan Channel. Here we

were met by the full force of the Gulf Stream flowing from the Caribbean Sea into the Gulf of Mexico, and so strong was the current, owing to the long prevalence of southerly winds, that although the log showed the vessel to be making seven or eight knots, the actual distance run as shown by observation did not exceed four knots.

So little frequented were those seas at that time that, although we had been nine days in tacking across the Gulf and passing through the Yucatan Channel, we had not seen a single sail.

We had now passed into the Caribbean Sea, when, one morning about daylight, during a dead calm, a large steamer was seen to the eastward. She was steering to the westward, and towards us. She seemed to have come from the locality of Jamaica, and was steering as if she intended to pass through the Yucatan Channel into the Gulf of Mexico. She looked like a ship of war, and I thought it might be a British cruiser, probably the *Rinaldo;* but old Jimmy, one of the seamen, declared it to be the Confederate steamer *Alabama.*

The stranger vessel was soon much nearer, but, as there was a slight haze, we could not yet make her out very well, and there was considerable conjecture as to what she was. At last, however, we made out the Confederate flag, and we showed our British ensign.

She still continued to steer straight for us. I did not altogether like this, for although I was satisfied that our provisional register would protect us, I still thought she must have some important object in bearing down upon such a small vessel, and thus making her presence known in those waters. I feared that she was going to put on board of us the crew of some unfortunate American vessel which she had destroyed.

She came up, stopped, and hailed us. On learning that we were from New Orleans nine days out, they asked if we had any newspapers, and could give them one. We replied we could.

They then lowered a boat, which came alongside of us, with an officer in the stern sheets.

Our captain gave orders to haul the jib to windward; but that was a mere form, as there was not a breath of wind. They said, never mind, as they would not detain us a minute—

which was also a mere form, for the same reason as we were not moving—but if we could give them any newspapers they would be much obliged.

We threw them a line, and asked them to come on board. The officer came. He said he would not ask to see our papers, but he supposed we were a "Whitewashed," * and asked the former name of the vessel. On being told it, he said he recognized the vessel, having seen her often at Mobile before the war.

I said she was under a provisional register, and was going to Belize to get a permanent register and official number.

He laughed, and said the official numbers on the British list had been getting much higher of late.

"Yes," cried our captain, "and thanks to the *Alabama* for that! and I suppose that is the name of your vessel?"

He nodded assent, but said, good-humouredly, that we were not to be too inquisitive on that point.

To which our captain rejoined: "But it has thrown many a poor fellow out of employment."

"Oh no!" replied he; "you get them to command under the British flag all the same."

He asked a good deal about New Orleans, the feeling there under Banks, and remarked that he thought it was a great pity that they had recalled Butler from New Orleans, as his actions there were doing a great deal of good to the Confederate cause. He referred with pleasure to the great defeat which General Lee had inflicted upon Hooker at Chancellorsville, which was about the last news they had heard, but expressed great sorrow for the death of Stonewall Jackson.

The greater part of the newspapers and periodicals which we had brought from New Orleans, of which we had a large number, had been gathered together, and were handed to him, which he declared to be a treasure, and would be more highly prized by them than our whole vessel and cargo would have been had she been a United States vessel, and captured by them.

He then said he supposed that, being such a short time out,

* A name at that time applied to vessels which had changed their nationality from the American flag to that of some other nation.

we would not be short of provisions? He said his reasons for asking this were, that capturing so many American vessels as they did, which were often loaded with provisions, and as they had no port to take them into, they had to destroy them, taking out of them first whatever they could use or stow away to advantage, so that they were generally overstocked with provisions, and often helped neutral vessels when they were in need. Although for this they seemed to get very little credit, and he spoke somewhat reproachfully about the bad name which they considered had been unjustly attached to them.

Having bundled up the newspapers, he stepped into his boat.

They then wished us good-bye, and good luck to the *Rob Roy* under her new flag, and rowed back to the steamer, which steamed away to the northward, and was soon out of sight; and a good breeze soon after springing up, the *Rob Roy* was bounding away to the southward towards her destination.

I afterwards learned that the object of the *Alabama* in going into the Mexican Gulf at this time was to meet a ship with a supply of coal, the rendezvous being the Alacran Reefs.

About two days afterwards the vessel arrived at Belize, Honduras.

I may here say that I afterwards learned from the master of a vessel that sailed from New Orleans a few days after us, that the reason that we had been stopped at the forts came about in this way: just as the vessel was leaving New Orleans, the harbour patrol came on board, who was an Irishman, who seemed to possess more pride of his own importance than common intelligence or knowledge of his duty, trifling as that was.

He, in a somewhat imperative tone, said he should stop the vessel from proceeding, because she had not the name of a hailing port on her stern. His only authority was his instructions to report at the custom house all vessels which sailed from the port, giving the name of the vessel and hailing port in full. The *Rob Roy* being under a provisional register, of course had no hailing port; but the tyranny of ignorant officials was at that time almost incredible; it was no use to remonstrate, officials then had it all their own way. A bribe was

what was wanted; but the captain, who was greatly enraged, defeated his object by lowering a boat and ordering the carpenter to take a paint-brush, and write after the vessel's name the words, "Of Belize, Honduras," the first three letters of the latter name being sufficient.

This completely disarmed the official; he had no power to make further inquiry.

The carpenter, however, being no great artist, the lettering was somewhat clumsy, and read something like "Balizehon," as already mentioned.

This the official mistook for Babylon, having probably never heard of Belize, but probably of Babylon, as some sinful town in the "ould counthrie," where shipmasters made rich; he accordingly reported at the custom house as having sailed down the river the "*Rob Roy*, of Babylon."

The more intelligent officials at the custom house, however, suspecting that there must be some devilry under this, at once telegraphed to the forts to stop the vessel until further inquiry, which was evaded by our slipping away from under the forts during the night.

Belize was a place of no great pretensions—a small settlement for the shipment of mahogany; this and dye-woods being the chief exports.

There was no wharf or quay of any size, and the vessels lay in a sort of bay, which was land-locked by a number of small islands or clumps of mangroves. The mahogany was floated down rivers and brought coast-ways to the place, and taken alongside of the vessels in small rafts.

In the small town there was some good stores, and some pretty, neat residences, where dwelt the merchants and principal men of the place.

Among the poorer or working class, if they may be so called, were a good many of the mixed breed, composed of White, Indian, and Negro blood, and of various complexions; but the greater proportion were of the old, half-spoiled, emancipated negro.

The place seemed to be thoroughly British, and the population seemed to get on very well in their own quiet way; and, although the town was in a rather low situation, with man-

groves in front and thick forests to the back, it appeared to be tolerably healthy.

We discharged what freight we had for the place, which consisted principally of shingles; but I found that there was no market for the remainder of the cargo, the market being already glutted with American goods.

The great depreciation of American currency and the high standard of gold and silver in the United States, had been the cause of immense shipments of goods being made from the United States to the West Indies and other places, where specie could be obtained in payment.

As there was considerable risk and danger from Confederate privateers on the seas at that time, a great many American shipowners deemed it expedient to put their vessels under a foreign flag, generally the British flag.

To effect this the usual way was to procure a British subject to assume the ownership, or stand godfather, as it was called, and a bill of sale was made out transferring the vessel to him, and if the transfer was made within the United States, the British Consul granted a provisional register to take the vessel to a British port.

The British subject, or godfather, granted back to the real American owner letters or power of attorney to do what he pleased with the vessel, so that it often happened that some British subject—often a clerk or lad in a shipping-office—was nominal owner of several vessels.

As no vessel can be under the United States flag unless she has been built in the United States (or condemned in a United States prize court), and any vessel once transferred from the United States flag to a foreign flag can never be re-transferred, or again become an American vessel, and a provisional register holds good for only six months, it was necessary to send the vessel at once to a British port, to be entered upon the British shipping-list, and obtain a permanent register and official number.

The vessel was generally loaded with American goods, and despatched to some British port, where the goods were sold cheap for specie, and the vessel put under a permanent register, and that port then became the hailing port of the vessel. This

was the cause of the West India market being at that time glutted with American goods.

There were several vessels lying at Belize which had recently changed their flags, and having obtained permanent register had discharged part of their cargoes, and were going to look for a market for the remainder.

From conversations with the captains of those vessels, I learned that a great number of American vessels had recently changed their flag and had been entered on the British shipping-list, the result being to add considerably to the number of British ships, and to reduce in proportion the number of American ships. I now understood the meaning of the remark made by the officer of the *Alabama* in regard to the official numbers in the British shipping-list getting higher.

The vessel was surveyed, the permanent register made out, the official number and tonnage marked on the main beam, and the *Rob Roy* was entered on the shipping-list as a British vessel.

A small quantity of light freight was obtained for Matamoras, and one passenger; and the vessel was cleared for that port, the two passengers from New Orleans continuing on board.

There was now a considerable change in the trim of the vessel. The weight of the freight which we had discharged at Belize was but little compensated for by the freight which we had taken on board, and the vessel now drew less than four feet of water with the centre board up. This was very convenient, as it enabled us to get a short and easy passage out to sea through the shallow waters among the mangrove islets.

When we got out to sea the weather we met with was what is generally termed "fresh trades," that is, trade-winds blowing very strong, and a pretty high sea. The wind was about due east, and as we lay our course it took us about a point forward of the beam. This allowed the vessel a good "full," and she bounded over the waves at a rapid rate, and so lightly did she rise to the seas that she scarcely wet her decks.

I was very highly pleased with her sailing qualities, and, going up to old Frank, the carpenter, said, "Well, what do you think of her now, Frank?"

Frank shook his head, and replied, "A little bit off her masts, Mr. W., a little bit off her masts."

"Do you still think so? She don't roll even in this heavy sea; and see how quick she rises to the seas without taking a drop of water on board."

"She don't roll," said he, "because there is a good breeze to keep her steady, and she rises quick to the seas because she is light; but she is not the better of that, she rises too quick, and that strains her rigging, for it throws the whole weight of it back with a jerk; if she was deeper she would not rise so fast; she might take some water over her bows, but it would be much easier on her rigging."

"But shortening the masts," said I, "would not affect that."

"It would not affect her rising quick to the seas, but it would greatly ease the strain on her fore- and aft-stays. She parted her fore-stay last voyage, and that was the way the captain got that strong new fore-stay put on her before we left New Orleans."

It was just then four bells, and Frank had to go to take his turn at the wheel; and away he went, continuing to say as he went—"A little bit off her masts, Mr. W., a little bit off her masts."

The man who Frank relieved at the wheel was old Jimmy the Scotchman, who, having walked forward as far as the mainmast, and took off his sou'-wester, which, though perfectly dry, he by sheer force of habit gave a couple of switches downward to throw off the water.

"What do you think of that, Jimmy?" said I, about shortening her mast.

"Weel, it wad ease her a heap," said Jimmy. "When she is light this way the water has unco' little grip a' her, and when she meets a big sea she flees up on it like a dog louping a dyke, and when her bow jumps up so quick it sends the whole weight of rigging back wae a sag, and wae the rake of thae tall masts it's gae and sair on the fore- and aft-stays."

It was not long until we had proof that they were right, for just as we were to windward of the Island of Cozomel the fore-stay parted with a loud crack, and the vessel came up with the

jibs fluttering in the wind. The main-boom came down with a sudden jerk, and the masts quivered as if they would have gone overboard.

Halliards were quickly let go and every sail taken in. The old fore-stay, which fortunately we had on board, was got up from the hold and bent to the fore-mast-head and the other end taken to the windlass and hove up taught, to act as a fore-stay *pro tem.*, and the vessel hove-to under a single-reefed fore-sail.

Darkness having set in, the men worked with lanterns, as there was not much time to lose, the Island of Cozumel being close under our lee.

Fortunately the stay which had parted was a new rope, and had sufficient spare length to allow a long splice being made; this was done, and the stay again set up, and in a few hours we made sail again.

I mention this incident merely to show the peculiarities of the motion of a flat, light-draught vessel of this kind on a wind in a heavy sea.

I now saw plainly the truth of what the old seaman had said, and that, unlike a sharp, deep vessel, she did not plough through the waves, but bounded over them. This gave her a quick, pitching motion, which with such tall masts threw a very heavy strain upon her fore- and aft-stays, and that it was necessary for sea-going purposes to have her masts shortened. And I may here say that when this was done some time afterwards it greatly improved her sea-going qualities.

The wind continued fresh and steady, and we soon doubled Cape Catouche, after which we had the wind free on our quarter, and having now the Gulf stream in our favour we crossed the Yucatan banks at a rapid rate, and in less than six days from the time we left Belize we arrived off the mouth of the Rio Grande, on which river is situated the Mexican town of Matamoras.

There was nothing to indicate the existence of any port or city—a bare and barren coast, which stretched about north and south, off which, at a distance of about four miles, in the open sea lay at anchor a fleet of nearly one hundred steamers and sailing-vessels, of various sizes and descriptions, in different stages of discharging and loading.

The place was about 26° north latitude, and being about the edge of the trade winds; these were rather unsteady, veering from north-east to south-east, but, coming with one unbroken sweep of over one thousand miles across the Gulf of Mexico, brought a heavy sea from east to west, which fell with full force upon the exposed and unbroken coast. While the Gulf stream, flowing directly along the coast from south to north, crossed the wind and seas, and kept the vessels in a most uncomfortable position.

Most of the vessels had storm try-sails set, to keep their heads to the seas. This helped them so long as the wind held steady, but when that lulled or veered the current brought them into the trough of the sea, and many of them, having discharged their cargoes and waiting for freight, were so light that they rolled and tumbled so that their keels could almost be seen, and the heavy coating of grass and barnacles on their bottoms testified that they must have rode long at anchor.

As we threaded our way through this tumbling mass of shipping, our captain and several of the crew, who had been here with the vessel in the previous winter, recognized many of the vessels which they had seen at that time, waiting for freight, still in the same place, with apparently little difference in their stage of loading. Yet not one of these vessels had a single spar sent down to ease her at her anchors; they had to be in constant readiness to proceed to sea at a moment's notice, the great danger being the frequent northers which swept those seas with more or less violence throughout a large portion of the year.

These northerly gales meeting the current of the Gulf stream raised a tremendous sea, which made it impossible for a vessel to ride at her anchors, so that on the slightest indication of a norther the vessels raised their anchors or slipped their cables and stood out to sea; many of them being so light were often driven far to the southward, and it took them many days, and sometimes weeks, to get back to their anchorage.

On looking upon this fleet of what might be truly called ships leading an unhappy life, one could not help casting a thought as to what was the great attraction to the place; and, having got through the fleet, we cast our eyes towards the shore,

about three miles distant, to discover the source of wealth supposed there to exist, or where the freight was to come from which was to load up so many vessels.

Between us and the shore there was an extensive shoal or sand-bar, over which the seas broke with great violence, and through which there was no visible passage even for our light-draught vessel.

Here we came to anchor to wait for a pilot to take us in over the bar.

We now surveyed the coast and supposed landing-place with our glasses; but we could discover not the least appearance of any houses or landing-place—only a coast and country as barren and dismal as it would be possible to conceive.

To the northward, near the coast, there were some sand hills, but in front and to the southward along the coast was a low stretch of sand wastes, and for miles up the country as far as the eye could reach there seemed to exist nothing but sand plains and some scrub brushwood.

Just about the termination of the sand hills, and between them and the sand plains, about half a mile inland, could be seen the masts of several small vessels, seemingly schooners, something of the same size and description as our own vessel, indicating that a river came down and entered the sea there, and near to them were some things like tents, and one or two small wooden shanties, and a great number of things that looked like black hillocks, but which were in reality piles of goods covered with tarpaulins.

The cause which attracted so many vessels to this place, and sent a boom of trade to Matamoras, at this time requires a little explanation.

The Federal forces had now crossed swords with the Confederates in the field sufficiently to know that they were not a power to be easily subdued by force of arms, and they saw the necessity of assailing their more vulnerable points, which was by blockading more closely their ports, cutting off their supplies, and crippling their resources.

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The blockade which at first had been rather inefficient, had now been greatly augmented and every port in the Confederate States was strongly blockaded, and though some

vessels did succeed in entering, the risk was very great; still as the Confederates found their resources to be giving out, the more indefatigable they became in their exertions and inventions.

A good deal of business had to be done by the Confederate Government through their agents abroad in regard to cotton bonds and other matters of importance, and a considerable amount of correspondence was necessary, for which there was no safe or convenient means of transmission.

The uncertainty and danger of it falling into the hands of the enemy precluded it being sent by blockade-running vessels.

The only outlet was through Mexico, a neutral nation, but almost entirely devoid of resources, having no regular inland postal conveyance, no safe or convenient seaports or harbours, and that part of it which lay nearest to the Confederate States was very thinly settled, and, with the exception of Matamoras on the Rio Grande, having neither towns, markets, nor roads.

The "Rio Grande," or "Rio Bravo," as it is sometimes called, is an exceedingly tortuous river about eighty yards in width, and varying—according to the seasons—from seven to nine feet in depth for about one hundred miles up from its mouth. On the right or Mexican side of the river is situated the town of Matamoras, about thirty miles from the sea, although to follow the windings of the river the distance would be about double that number of miles.

On the left bank or Texas side of the river, and immediately opposite Matamoras, is the town of Brownsville.

Between the Mexican town of Matamoras and the American town of Brownsville there was a ferry, and by this ferry was the only communication between the Confederate States and the rest of the world which was not blockaded.

The Rio Grande being a neutral river could not be blockaded; but, supposing it to have been practicable to have shipped goods in small vessels up the river direct to Brownsville, or shipped cotton direct from that place, any vessel bound to, or cleared from, that port would have been liable to capture on the open sea. Brownsville being declared a blockaded port by sea, though not against Mexico, it was therefore necessary to have all goods and correspondence passed through a neutral

port. The amount of goods that were thus passed through Mexico, and the fearful labour and cost of such means of transmission, will give some idea of the importance of the blockade.

As regards correspondence, the nearest port from which correspondence could be sent by a mail route was Tampico, in Mexico; at this place the British mail steamer called once a month, and the Spanish mail steamer called once a month, thus making fortnightly mails from that place.

The distance from Richmond—the Confederate capital—to Brownsville was about 1,500 miles, and from Brownsville to Tampico about 270 miles. Very little of this distance was covered by railway or water conveyance, and over several hundred miles of it there were no roads at all.

But it was in the transmission of goods that the greatest amount of labour and expense was incurred.

On the whole of the eastern coast of Mexico there was not a single port or harbour, with the exception of Laguna in Yucatan, which would admit a vessel drawing over eight feet of water, and very few that would admit vessels drawing more than six feet. All vessels exceeding that draught had to ride at anchor in the open sea, and discharge and embark their cargoes by means of small vessels or lighters, which carried it over the dangerous bars when the weather would permit.

The port, or place of landing and embarking for Matamoras was in the river Rio Grande, near the mouth; but it was only small vessels drawing four and a half feet of water which could enter that river, on account of the shoal I have mentioned above.

The danger of loss or damage to the goods in crossing the bar in lighters was very great, and entailed a high rate of insurance. Besides the port charges the Mexican Government levied a duty of 12½ per cent. *ad valorem* upon all goods imported, which must be paid before the goods were landed, and the latter even then lay on the open sand of the river bank, without any protection.

They had then to be carted over bad roads a distance of thirty miles to Matamoras, in order to be ferried to Brownsville. Here again the Mexican Government levied a duty of

12½ per cent. on all goods exported before the goods were allowed to cross the ferry. After paying a high rate for ferriage the goods were landed at Brownsville, and were within the Confederate States. They were still however over three hundred miles from any population, town, or market, the nearest towns of any note being Austin and Houston. Over this distance there was no formed road, and the goods were conveyed in ox teams across the plains, the time occupied being generally from six weeks to two months.

The exports in return for these goods, and also for implementing the obligation on cotton bonds, was cotton, which had to be conveyed out by the same route, pass through Mexico, pay to Mexico import and export duties, and undergo the danger of getting it out over the bar to the ships.

Notwithstanding all this labour and expense, the demand for goods in the Confederate States, and the still greater demand for cotton outside, was so great that the quantity of goods imported and cotton exported by this route was incredible. The heavy charges were never considered where money would forward the object.

The chief difficulty was in conveying the goods and the cotton across the plains between Brownsville and Houston, especially during the long droughts, which burnt up the grass and dried up the water on the plains, so that there was neither food nor water for the beasts, and they died in hundreds, and, I suppose, the track of the route across the plains might be traced by their bones to this day.

The cotton famine had produced a cotton mania, and the very name of cotton sounded like magic in the ears of speculators, and caused a general rush to be made in any direction where it was supposed to be obtainable.

Such was the cause of so many vessels being attracted to the mouth of the Rio Grande at this time.

It had been represented to me that very high inducements were held out for a light-draught sea-going vessel like the *Rob Roy*, which could cross the bar and proceed up the river direct to Matamoras, land her cargo, take in a cargo of cotton, and proceed direct to Havana, where there was a good market for cotton; and, as this would be a neutral vessel, trading

between two neutral ports, she would be free from all risk of capture from either side.

It was with this object in view that I had come to the Rio Grande, but it was not long until I discovered that the prospects of an advantageous trade in that direction were entirely visionary.

CHAPTER III.

Communication with the Confederate States through Mexico—The cotton mania—The Brownsville route across the plains—Its difficulties and uncertainties.

HAVING anchored inside of the fleet of larger vessels and outside of the bar, we signalled for a pilot, and one soon came on board.

He told us that he could not take the vessel in over the bar until about ten o'clock next morning, when it would be high water, the tides here being very small—the rise and fall at ordinary tides seldom exceeding two feet, and only one tide in twenty-four hours, although they are often much affected by strong winds.

Having learned from the pilot that a steamer was going up the river to Matamoras that afternoon, and that the vessel must be entered at Matamoras, I decided to embrace the opportunity to go ashore in the pilot's boat, taking with me the vessel's papers, and after having a look at the place on shore, proceed by steamer to Matamoras.

By paying three dollars I got a passage ashore in their boat, which crossed the bar, entered the river, and proceeded up about half a mile, and landed at a place where lay several small schooners about the same size and class as the *Rob Roy*, and a number of smaller vessels under the Mexican flag, which acted as lighters.

This place was called Bagdad, but from what cause it got that name I do not know, unless from likeness to a port on a river flowing through a sandy desert.

I was very far from being favourably impressed with the

place I had come to, but I had not much time to regard it closely, and was soon on the steamer proceeding up the river.

I had been wondering why these small vessels which lay near the mouth of the river choose to discharge and load their cargoes there rather than go up the river to Matamoras direct, as I knew that there was sufficient depth of water in the river for any vessel which could cross the bar; but as soon as I came to observe the nature of the river, and the way in which the steamer had to force her way up, the cause was explained. It would no doubt have been passable for them, and there was no official restriction, but the time and expense would certainly have exceeded any advantage gained.

The river flowing through a level country was exceedingly tortuous, and many of the turns were so sharp that the steamer, though of no great length, could not be steered round them, but often had to butt up against the banks, which caused her head to bound off and pushed her round, and by backing and repeating this several times, she succeeded in getting round the corners.

This showed that it would have been almost impossible to have sailed up, and none seem to have attempted it except some very small vessels, which worked up by the help of oars.

In about three hours after leaving Bagdad the steamer came in sight of Matamoras, and was quite close to it, but there was still about fifteen miles' sailing to do round by the crooked river before we reached it.

Having at length reached Matamoras, I sought out the office of the British Consul, with whom I deposited the register of the vessel and the crew list and a copy of the manifesto of the cargo; but he told me that although the vessel and cargo were consigned to me, that I could not enter the vessel at the custom house myself, and that it would be necessary—if I had no consignee—to get a custom-house broker to get it done, there being plenty of such in the place.

He had the address-cards of several English brokers in the place, one of which he handed to me.

This man, whose name was Westropp, and who called himself an Englishman, was very willing to transact the business, and went with me to the custom house.

The manifesto, which was vised by the Mexican Consul at Belize, was quite in order, and a "Form" for entry handed to the broker to fill up. In this "Form" there was a space for the name of the consignee, and the broker told me that it would require to be filled up by some name, though only for a form, and I might put down the name of any resident in the place—his own name, for instance, would do. I hesitated, and said that if it was necessary for me to have a consignee, I would have a merchant of the place. Whereupon the collector, who understood and spoke English, told me that if I was going to pay the port dues and import duties in advance, there was no need of a consignee, but the broker might put down his name to fill up the space, and show by whom the vessel was entered.

Having paid the duties and port charges, the receipt and permit to discharge was given to me.

I then asked the broker for an account of his fees, which he made out, charging me twenty-five dollars for his commission and trouble and ten dollars for stamped papers and extras, which I paid him, and took his receipt.

Finding that there would be no steamer back to Bagdad for some time, but that a coach would leave for that place on the following day, I employed my time in looking round the place and calling upon some of the merchants, with a view of ascertaining what prospects there might be of disposing of the cargo and obtaining a freight for Havana.

The whole town was enveloped in a cloud of dust. By the long drought the soil on the roads and streets had by the enormous traffic been ground into a fine powder, which covered them to the depth of several inches; this was whirled about by the wind in every direction, and as windows and doors had to be kept open on account of the heat, no place was free from dust. Men looked like millers, with clothes, hair, and beard saturated, so that it was difficult to recognize one from another. Horses and mules shook their heads to throw the dust out of their ears, while the dust adhering to their perspiring hides made them appear all of one colour.

Inside the houses and stores, beds, tables, and other things were covered with dust-cloths, which when the former were

required for use, the cloths were carefully lifted by the corners and the dust emptied out.

I thought there must certainly be some strong inducement for people to live in such a place.

The houses were mostly of one story, none more than two, with flat roofs, and were all thickly pitted with bullet-marks, which seemed to have been made at different times, but most of them were the effects of an attack on the town not long previously by a revolutionary party, who had not succeeded in capturing it, but were repulsed by the troops and townspeople.

For this gallant defence an honourable appellation was bestowed upon the town by the then existing government, by the prefix of the letter H. to its name, and all official documents were headed H. Matamoras, signifying "Heroic Matamoras."

On my asking an old resident of the place whether there were many killed, as the marks on the houses seemed to indicate, he replied, "Oh, no! they are great people here for shooting the houses; they don't shoot the people so much."

On my inquiries among the merchants as to the state of business, the reply was the same from all of them.

They said that I had come at a bad time; there had been a great deal of business done lately, but it was now at a standstill. The transportations across the plains was stopped in consequence of the long drought, the water on the way being dried up, and the grass withered, so that there was neither water nor grass to support the beasts on the route; but they were looking forward to a good heavy rain, which would supply water on the way and cause the grass to grow, when trade would revive again.

I found that some of them who were expecting cotton from Texas, and were not bound to ship it by any particular vessel or agency, would prefer to ship it by small vessels, which could cross the bar and go direct to Havana, and save the delay, damage, and high charges for lighterage, and that I might get a freight to Havana if I could afford to wait until trade would revive again; but that depended on the weather, and the prospects were exceedingly remote.

The town was actually blocked up with goods; every place

where merchandise could be stored was filled, and many of the inhabitants had let their houses for this purpose.

On the following day I returned to Bagdad. When I got there I found that the vessel had been safely brought in over the bar and lay with the other vessels at the river-bank, in a place safe and convenient enough for all purposes; but the prospect of a market for the cargo was cheerless in the extreme.

The immense piles of goods which had been landed from the ships lay wasting, and on most of them the enormous charges for lighterage, which had been laid on heavily, when added to the freight, port dues, and import duties far exceeded the value of the goods, and in many cases the owners had disowned and abandoned them altogether, leaving those who had made the charges to make the most of them. In fact, everything seemed to be in a state of chaos so far as regarded business, every one trying to grab what he could, and many schemes there were to make money out of the crisis.

Every small vessel that would do for a lighter had been brought to the place, put under the Mexican flag and converted into a lighter; now many of these were lying idle; a few of the most influential had formed a ring, and got this business into their own hands, and by that general unknown influence managed to keep out others, controlled the business, and kept up the charges.

One enterprising Yankee brought to the place a large number of tarpaulins, off which he was reaping a harvest by hiring them out at a dollar each per night for covering goods and other purposes.

Restaurants were conducted under tarpaulins spread over poles, and rough wooden sheds hastily knocked together were used as grocery stores and rum mills, as they were called.

Men employed on lighters and as labourers were paid at the rate of four and five dollars per day, and there were gamblers in abundance ready to divest them of their earnings.

Diversities of fortune were rapid and sudden, some made rich harvests, others lost heavily. I cannot say, however, that lawlessness, riot, or violence to person existed to any extent. The Mexican authorities maintained peace and good order in

that respect, and let the trade go on. They took care to exact their moiety in duties and charges, and a rich harvest they made.

I saw all this, but I knew of no other port to which I might go where there was the slightest chance of selling the cargo or getting employment for the vessel, and it was evident to me that whatever might be the loss there was no other course open for me but to lie still and keep my cargo on board, and wait to see if trade would revive again.

I found myself in a very bad and almost ruinous position, for the expenses of the vessel and wages of the crew were going on. I was, however, thankful that I had the vessel for an asylum and as a safe store for my cargo, for I knew that if I landed it here it was certain to become the prey of sharpers.

Even on board it did not seem to be so well protected from this class as I had imagined, for in the course of a few days who should come on board but Mr. Westrope, the broker, claiming to be consignee of the cargo on the strength of his name being entered as consignee in the bill of entry, and asserting that if I did not turn over the cargo to him I must pay him four per cent. as commission on the total value of the cargo.

He had no doubt been actuated to attempt this trick by seeing the many acts of extortion practised upon strangers by sharpers in the general confusion of business.

Such acts, however, were confined mostly to the foreign colony at Bagdad, at the mouth of the river, and among themselves; but this was an act of which the Mexican Government would take cognizance, and on the case coming before the court at Matamoras, the judge nonsuited him and ordered him out of court as a "Chevalier d'industrie," and his license as a broker was revoked. The affair, however, cost me some trouble and expense. Whilst I was at Matamoras attending to this case I became aware of a transaction of a different nature, by which one of the many Confederate officials—who within the limits of the Confederacy acted with rather high hand—was clearly outwitted.

In the large amount of cotton which at this time was brought across the plain out of Texas, it was necessary that each lot

of cotton should have a particular mark and number, and its weight shown, to facilitate its passing through the Mexican Customs; and the owner proved his property by producing a bill of sale, corresponding to the marks, numbers, and weights. About this time the Confederate exchequer in the Texas district was getting low, it was resolved to replenish it by purchasing a large quantity of cotton and getting it shipped from Mexico by way of Brownsville and Matamoras. It was purchased by what was called pressing it, that was by forcibly taking possession of it on the plantations and paying the owners in Confederate money, or by a warrant on the Confederate treasury at a price fixed by the Government.

The price allowed was high, and would have been very acceptable to the planter had the money or warrants been good. Of course some had great faith in the ultimate success of the Confederate States, and accepted it readily enough. Others had grave doubts, although they dared not express them openly, but they generally tried, if possible, to sell their cotton at a low price for specie or try and convey it to Brownsville on their own account.

But the great difficulty was the long route across the plains, and then they required a permit from the Government to allow it to go out of the country by crossing the ferry from Brownsville to Matamoras.

The men appointed to carry out this business belonged to what was called the "Cotton Bureau"; many of them were young men holding commissions in the army.

They were generally of the stay-at-home class, and had got these appointments by favour, preferring this kind of duty to taking part with the army in the field. They were often pompous and overbearing, and endowed more with a sense of their own importance than business tact or discretion.

Their duty in this instance was to take possession of cotton on the plantations, and mules to carry it, and give the owners receipts for it. Many of these officials, fancying themselves armed with absolute power, were not particular about what cotton they seized, but took that which was most handy and could be conveyed to Brownsville with the least trouble.

It so happened that an English agent had been into Texas

with a large amount of goods, which he had sold, and bought cotton with the proceeds. This cotton he had proceeded to convey across the plains, but had only got a short part of the way when the teamsters refused to go further till rain would fall and give water for the cattle to drink on the way. No such obstacles were allowed to be thrown in the way of the Government cotton in charge of those officials; it must proceed although a mule or a yoke of oxen should die every half-mile—they had only to press more into service. One of these officials seeing the cotton belonging to this agent, thought it exceedingly handy, and took possession of it. The owner protested, but to no purpose. The official said the cotton was required for the public service, which was paramount to all other rights. He threw him a receipt, and told him to go to the office at the Cotton Bureau, and he would be paid—in Confederate money, of course. He then seized mules wherever they were to be had, and proceeded with the cotton towards Brownsville. He at length reached that place after strewing the route with dead mules and oxen, and boasted loudly of his feat.

Being, as he represented, Government cotton, there was no difficulty about a permit to go out of the country, and it was soon crossed over the ferry to Matamoras.

In the meantime, the party who owned the cotton had been keeping out of sight, but cautiously watching his progress, and as soon as the cotton was crossed to the Mexican side he put in an appearance, and going up to the official, with the bill of sale in his hand, he thanked him for his assistance in bringing the cotton across the plains, but told him that he need not give himself any further trouble as he would now take charge of it himself.

The official fired up, and demanded to know what he meant, but the owner of the cotton pointed across the river to Brownsville, and said, "You had it all your own way over there, but I will have something to say here."

The light now began to dawn upon the official, who seemed to have imagined the power of his commission and authority unlimited, and had never thought it would be affected by the crossing of a small ferry, when an old Texan, standing by, who had been disgusted with the military tyranny in the

Confederacy, and had taken refuge on the Mexican side, turned towards the official, and said, in a provoking tone, "Ah, Mr. Ballroom Buttons, that old ferry-boat has shaved your hair off"—referring to Samson deprived of his strength.

The officer, still placing faith in his commission and orders to impress cotton for the benefit of the public service, appealed to the Mexican authorities, but they could recognize no other title to ownership than the bill of sale corresponding to the marks and numbers on the bales.

The agent had thus got his cotton conveyed across the plains very handily; but how the discomfited official reported to his superiors I do not know.

I need not take up the time of the reader with any further accounts of this place, but return to my own position, which was every day becoming more and more straitened.

The other vessels which lay near us were mostly in charge of captains acting for owners in other parts of the world, and they were waiting for freight or orders. They had reduced expenses by getting rid of their crews, with the exception of one or two, including the cook, and they took matters easy.

Some of them expressed their great admiration for the *Rob Roy*, and said if she belonged to them they would soon know what to do with her, meaning that she was most admirably adapted for running the blockade into the Texas ports. I said I would be very glad to sell both vessel and cargo if they desired a vessel for that purpose. But though I found plenty of both seamen and merchants who would like to buy her for that purpose, their terms as to payment did not suit me. They offered a large price, provided I would accept bill or bonds, on the vessel in payment, but none were prepared to come down with the ready cash, and as this offer threw the risk upon me, and the chance of loss of all if the vessel was captured, and all the profits to them if she went free, I declined the offer.

Since we had arrived several small vessels had arrived in the river, most of them from the New England States or from British America, but all bearing the British flag. One of them had been out over fifty days, and had got short of provisions, and she had been boarded by the *Alabama*—some three weeks

after the latter vessel had boarded us—who supplied her with some provisions.

A small schooner also arrived from Texas with a cargo of cotton. She had run the blockade out of Brazos River, and put into the Rio Grande as the first neutral port. With her captain and owner, Captain Shaeffer, I had some conversation about the blockaded Texas ports.

Captain Shaeffer soon after bought one of the newly-arrived schooners, a beautiful, swift-looking vessel, and sailed for the Brazos River again, but was chased and run ashore, where he set fire to his vessel, and she was burned to the water's edge.

After laying here for about six weeks I found no alteration in the state of matters—for the better, at least; and as the revival of trade was said to depend upon the weather, and a supply of rain to make the grass grow, the prospects seemed rather remote, and I began to fancy myself in the position of the horse which died of starvation while waiting for the grass to grow.

News had also arrived of the fall of Vicksburg and Port Hudson, and this rather cast a damp on the trade *viâ* Brownsville and Matamoras, as it gave the Federals the command of the Mississippi River, and cut off the communication between Texas and other parts west of the Mississippi River and the other parts of the Confederacy.

Having already had a sufficient share in the strife between the North and South, I had no desire of getting mixed up in any way on either side; but the position in which I was now placed was becoming desperate, and it was plain that I must make some movement.

The Federal Government of the United States had now fully determined to stop or cripple, at least, the trade which was being carried on through Mexico by way of Brownsville.

To effect this they had recourse to some acts which were supposed to involve questions of international law.

During the time we lay here, there was seized, at her anchorage off the mouth of the Rio Grande, a large British steamer called the *Sir William Peel*, which had just completed loading with cotton.

On what grounds she was seized I never learnt exactly. I

heard various reasons assigned, one of which was that she had on board a large quantity of cotton which was the property of the Confederate States. It was also reported that orders had been given to the Federal cruisers to overhaul and search vessels at sea, and seize and detain any to which suspicion might attach, whether they were within the limits of the blockaded ports or not. This order, whether given or not, their naval officers did not fail to carry out to the full extent, and many vessels, British and others, were overhauled and seized, although several hundred miles from any blockaded port.

It was supposed that the British at least, who were generally so prominent in maintaining their rights and supremacy on the seas, would take some action in the matter, but although careful notes and depositions were taken of each case any immediate action did not seem to begin. Of course it was not to be supposed that the British Government would make a formal demand, or rush into an international controversy about every little vessel carrying the British flag, which might get itself into trouble, but there were instances of greater importance, such as the case of the *Sir William Peel* and others, against which there seemed to be no just grounds for seizure, and the apparent apathy of the British Government caused a good deal of astonishment, especially to those connected with trade, in that part of the world. There was one reason which I heard assigned for this apathy which I was inclined to credit, as under it lay considerable diplomatic strategy, international law being based and maintained very much upon precedents.

There had been some important questions long pending between Great Britain and the United States, one of which was the right of searching neutral vessels at sea by belligerents in time of war. The maintenance of this right by Great Britain was one of the chief causes which led to a war between the United States and Great Britain in 1812, but the peace of Europe in 1814 having removed this grievance for the time made the question of less importance. And the "Treaty of Ghent" between Great Britain and the United States was concluded in the same year without the question being definitely settled, and it therefore remained in abeyance.

In the long interval of peace which followed, each nation continued to hold their different views on the question.

During the Crimean War one or two trifling events occurred, or were said to have occurred, which brought out some articles in the American newspapers, strongly condemning the action of some British war vessels, and stoutly maintaining the doctrine that the flag should cover the cargo; but nothing of importance happened until the breaking out of the Civil War in America, when the Federal Government at Washington, acting upon the doctrine maintained by the British Government, turned it to its own account and advantage, and stopped on the high seas and boarded the British mail steamer *Trent*, and took off two passengers, Mason and Slidell, the accredited Commissioners from the Confederate States to the Courts of Great Britain and France respectively. The indignation of the British nation, and the prompt demand for a disavowment of the act, and the immediate delivery up of these men under a threat of war is well known.

The position of the United States was somewhat difficult, but Mr. Seward, who at the time was at the head of the Cabinet at Washington, endeavoured to contrive out of the event the settlement of the international question. So he therefore, in reply to this demand, addressed to the British Minister a voluminous communication, going fully into the question of the right of search of neutral vessels, and readily agreeing to give up the men, with congratulations to both nations, that the vexed question was now definitely settled.

The reply of the British Minister was remarkable for its brevity: it was that he would be prepared to receive the ministers.

While Mr. Seward was most likely congratulating himself on his master stroke of diplomacy, the nation at large was stung with humiliation, and enraged at what they considered Great Britain taking advantage of their position to make an imperious demand, and still more the damaging results to them which might accrue through the influence of the wily commissioners in France and Britain, and the advantage which might be obtained by their enemies the Confederates, who only

required free intercourse and supplies to make them a very formidable power.

Meanwhile the Confederates were receiving considerable aid through means of blockade runners and the Mexican route, and the clamour for more vigorous measures to put it down was supposed to have been the cause of President Lincoln giving the orders I have referred to; and as the carrying out of such orders, after the *Trent* affair, would completely nullify any precedent which would arise out of that case, it was supposed that Britain would not be over-ready to interfere.

It was after reflection, and with a knowledge of the state of matters before me, that I began to consider whether this so-called legitimate trade with the Confederate States through Mexico, or the more dashing and desperate trade through the blockade, was the most tempting.

Blockade running was not regarded as either unlawful or dishonourable, but rather as a bold and daring enterprise. It was no surreptitious breach of any law, but merely defiance of a barrier placed and maintained by no other right than by the force of arms; and those who attempted to brave it did so at their own risk, subject by the laws of war to be fired upon, their vessel sunk or captured, themselves drowned, killed, or wounded in the course of the capture, but that was the extent of the liability.

They had broken no law, and no charge for such could be brought against them, and no punishment beyond confiscation of the vessel and cargo.

It was simply an act of war, subject to the laws of war, and to me who had little or no knowledge or experience in the mercantile line it was much more congenial than the extortions and deceitful wheedling and trickeries of the *legitimate* trade.

I soon came to a conclusion, and determined, if possible, to stake my fortune in making the attempt.

CHAPTER IV.

No prospect of business—Reduced to straits—Resolve to try a bolder venture—A new captain and crew shipped—Captain J.—A word of warning as to him—Departure for the blockaded coast—Arrival in Texas, but not unscathed.

MY mind was now set upon making the attempt, but there were many obstacles in the way.

My present captain and crew I could not expect to engage with me in this business; they would therefore have to be paid off, and the amount of their passage to New Orleans paid to them, and a new captain and crew for the purpose would have to be engaged, and they would have to get an advance as customary in blockade running.

I may here say, that the wages paid to seamen and officers when running the blockade was at the highest rate of ordinary wages, and, besides this, there was a bonus for the trip, varying from 100 dollars to 500 dollars, according to position and the nature of the trip. One half of this bonus was paid in advance, the other half when the voyage was successfully terminated.

Besides this advance to the crew, there would be export duties on the cargo to pay, and a good outfit for the vessel, in the way of provisions and other stores, such as cordage to make everything sufficiently strong to stand crowding of sail, or to replace anything if carried away or cut by a shot.

As this would require more money than I could command without selling the cargo, and, as there was no possibility of obtaining a loan on any terms, I concluded to accept an offer which had been made to me by a gentleman at Brownsville.

This offer was by no means an advantageous one, but it was the best that had been made, and about the best I could do under the circumstances.

It was that I should sell to him one half of the vessel and cargo for a certain sum. He to pay me one fourth of this sum in cash, and the balance in four months or after the first

voyage was made, he of course paying half of the disbursements of the voyage.

The first voyage was to be through the blockade into Texas, and the cargo consigned to a merchant in Houston, who would furnish in exchange a cargo of cotton, and he would appoint a man to go in the vessel as a supercargo to represent him and his interests.

In this agreement it will be seen, that the risk fell almost entirely upon me, but the vessel and cargo were put at a pretty high value.

The principal object now was to get a suitable captain and crew, and this was a matter of much difficulty. I would have undertaken to navigate the vessel myself, if I could have got a crew, but no crew would engage to serve under me in such a dangerous service, from the notion that I was not an experienced seaman.

Several of the masters of the vessels alongside had expressed to me their desire and ambition to become master of a blockade runner, but somehow when it came to the point there was hesitation, and something always came in the way.

When I paid off my old captain and crew, one of the latter, named Ned, the most intelligent and best seaman among them, offered to go with me as mate, if I would take the command myself. This I would have done, but I found it impossible to get a crew.

In the meantime a captain of a barque which lay outside of the bar waiting for cargo called upon me. He said that his mate, whom he had engaged at New Orleans, had a great desire to become master of a blockade runner, and, that situated as his vessel was, he had no wish to stand in his way if a chance offered. He also said that for several reasons he gave me, he wished to reduce the expenses of the ship. He could, therefore, spare the mate if he wished to go, and even one or two of the hands.

I asked him about the mate's character. He said that he had not been very long with him, and could not say very much about him, but had nothing against him, and thought he would be suitable for my purpose. I was very wishful to

get away from the place, and had few men to choose from, and I desired to see the man.

On the following day the mate came to see me. He was a stout, powerful built man, a native of Cork in Ireland, but had been some years in New Orleans. He looked like a sober man, and had rather a gentlemanly address. On entering into the subject with him, he gave me very good reasons for his desire to engage in the business, and seemed to understand what would be required of him.

I engaged him, and he promised to join the vessel on the following day, and to bring one or two hands with him.

My new captain, whom I will call Captain J., joined the vessel as arranged, and brought with him two men; but very shortly after he joined, my former mate, Ned, declined to proceed in the vessel, and asked as a favour for his discharge. He did not ask for his passage to New Orleans but only wages, which I paid him. I pressed him for his reasons for leaving the vessel, but he would give no other reply than that he would have gone if I had taken the command myself.

Captain J. then said there was a young man on board of the barque who had a great desire to get on. He was a most active and able seaman, and understood most thoroughly all the practical parts in the management of a vessel. Although he did not know anything of navigation, but he would make an excellent mate if I would engage him.

As I knew I could navigate the vessel myself, if anything happened to the captain, I agreed to this, and the young man joined the vessel as mate.

Two other men and a cook were picked up, and new articles drawn out and signed by the men.

In running the blockade it was not the custom—when it could be avoided—to clear for the blockaded port, but for some port beyond, or in the direction of the blockaded port. This was to facilitate the clearance, but it did not make the voyage any safer, as the Yankees took note of every vessel which had run the blockade, and would seize her no matter what port she was cleared for, if she was any way for the direction of a blockaded port.

In this case the *Rob Roy* had not yet run the blockade, and

I cleared for New Orleans, intending that place as a back door and as a last resource, to go there, if we found we could not get into any of the Texas ports, and while we were on the direct course for New Orleans, we would sail past the blockaded Texas ports, and run in if a chance offered.

About the time the crew were got on board, some cases of yellow fever were reported at Bagdad, and as it was always best to get a new shipped crew out of harm's way, a pilot was engaged, and the vessel taken out over the bar and anchored in the open roads. This was near the end of August and there was scarcely a breath of wind.

I went up to Matamoras to get the clearance completed, and whilst I was there I called upon a gentleman—a Mr. B.—whom I had been acquainted with in New Orleans, and whose wife had lately come from that city to join her husband in Matamoras.

Mrs. B. said she had been wanting to see me, and asked me about the man I had engaged as captain. If I knew much about him? I said I did not. She said she had come as passenger from New Orleans on the barque on which he was mate, and she rather thought I had committed an error in employing him; however, she said she might be mistaken, but she would advise me to be on my guard.

This was not very pleasing news to me, knowing as I did, the arbitrary powers which were vested in captains of such vessels in these parts at that time, and it was a very difficult matter to change a captain.

I thanked her, however, and said I would be on my guard, wondering if the captain of the barque had recommended him to me because he wished to get rid of him, and whether this was the cause of Ned's desire to leave the vessel, as it was evident that he knew something of Captain J.

It also turned out that the young man whom Captain J. recommended to me for mate was his own brother-in-law, but this was natural.

When I got back to the vessel, I found all pleasant enough. Mr. P., the person appointed by my partner to act for him, had joined her. The captain had been mostly on shore, but the mate had been very industrious in overhauling the rigging and getting everything in order and ready for sea.

After lying here about a week, during which it was nearly a dead calm, a light, steady breeze sprang up from the south-east, and we set sail.

About two days after leaving the Rio Grande, Captain J. was taken seriously ill with fever, and it was supposed that while on shore the few days before leaving, he had caught the yellow fever at Bagdad.

Myself, Mr. P., and some of the crew, having already had that disease, were in no danger, but those who had not yet had it were warned to keep forward.

After the captain was laid up, having instruments of my own, and knowing the rates of the chronometer, I took charge of the navigation of the vessel myself.

The mate did very well in handling the vessel, but he was a little proud of his position, and somewhat pugnacious and tyrannical with the men, except those which had come with him from the barque.

I soon observed that there was a division among the men; the two which had come from the barque were of one party and were hand and glove with the mate; the other two picked up at Matamoras were by themselves and kept quiet.

The cook—a burly Englishman with a broken nose—who delighted in the sobriquet of "Chesshire Bob," was neutral, delighted in his grog, and when he got that on board he cared neither for the mate nor any one else.

I had learned before leaving the Rio Grande that there was no war vessel constantly anchored off the mouth of the Brazos River, but two very fast sailing vessels cruised off the mouth—the one a barque, and the other a three-masted schooner, both armed with long-range guns. Whilst about eight steam vessels, frigates and gunboats, were anchored off Galveston, one of which took a cruise every day along the Texas coast to the westward.

We had been out five days tacking against the light head winds, and I found our longitude to be about ten miles west of the mouth of Brazos River. We had just tacked off shore and were standing out to sea again, the weather was a little thick and there had been a light squall and a shower of rain. When that cleared off there suddenly appeared a sail to

the eastward and from the quickness of her motions it was easy to see that she was a man-of-war. To think of keeping out of her way was useless, I accordingly ordered the vessel to be kept on her course, hoisted the colours and luffed up a little, to meet the war vessel as if desirous to speak.

She was a three-masted schooner and bore quickly down upon us, and ordered us to heave to.

We luffed up and hauled the jib to windward. She passed under our lee, and rounded to with her guns bearing upon us. She hailed us.

"Where are you from?"

"From the Rio Bravo," answered the mate.

I told the mate to stand aside, that I would speak to them.

"How can you be from that river and it blockaded"; but before I had time to reply another voice cried out—

"How much cotton have you got?"

"We have no cotton," I replied.

"You have come out from Brazos River and have no cotton. How is that?"

"You have mistaken the name," said I. "We are from the Rio Bravo in Mexico, better known as the Rio Grande, and bound for New Orleans with part return cargo."

"I must board you," said the officer.

They were soon alongside; the whole boat's crew jumped on deck, and the officer came aft.

"You will want to see our papers," said I.

"Yes," said he, "and your cargo too."

The hatches were taken off, and the men went down and inspected the hold, and reported to the officer what cargo was there.

The officer put some questions to me about the cargo. I said I had bought it at New Orleans about three months previous, and had been on a trading voyage to British Honduras and Mexico, and had sold part of it and was returning to New Orleans with the remainder.

"Are you the captain," said he, quickly.

"No, I am the owner. The captain has been taken seriously ill about three days ago, and as there were several cases of yellow fever at the Rio Grande, I fear it may be that he has

got; therefore I am in no hurry to get to New Orleans until he has fairly recovered lest we might be put in quarantine."

"But you can't have a clean bill of health from the Rio Grande if there is yellow fever there."

"We have," said I, "from the town of Matamoras, but it was after we got our clean bill of health that it broke out, at Bagdad, at the mouth of the river; we lay seven days outside of the bar waiting for a wind, and the captain was on shore during that time; but if you will come down to the cabin I will show you our papers."

He came down to the cabin and saw the captain sick in his bunk. He glanced hurriedly over the papers, and said he would not detain us longer, ordered the men into the boat and took his leave, and the vessels soon parted.

What they might have done had all been well with us I do not know; but I could see plainly that they did not care to have much to do with a vessel which had a case of yellow fever on board.

The same evening it came on a heavy gale from the south-east, which caused us to heave to, and we were hove to for about thirty-six hours.

When the gale moderated, and it became clear, I found that we had been driven to the southward and westward about thirty miles.

From the strong current setting to westward caused by the gale, and the very light south-easterly winds, the beating up to eastward again made but slow progress, and we had got to about ten miles west of the Brazos River, and about twenty-five miles off the coast, when daylight broke upon us in a dead calm; and there, about four miles to the south-westwards, lay our friend the three-masted schooner, which our men had learned from the boat's crew was named the *Kittitinie*.

She lay becalmed and helpless like ourselves, but it was not long before a boat was seen making towards us, and in a short time the boat was alongside with an armed crew.

"What! is this the *Rob Roy* again?" cried the officer.

"It is," said I.

"Why are you still hanging about here?"

"We were driven back about thirty miles in that gale and

we are now working our way up again, and I wish to make the fleet at Galveston, to get some medicines, that is, if you can't supply us. It looks like a clear case of the yellow fever that our captain has got, and if I had the right medicine I could cure him."

"What kind of medicine do you want?"

"Lobelia," said I.

"I am afraid we can't supply you," said he, "but I have no doubt you will get it at the supply ship at Galveston."

The men had had a long pull in the boat and the morning was hot. They seemed inclined to rest a little before they started on their way back. I asked them to come on board, but they declined, and after a friendly chat they started back to their vessel.

The officer seemed a very good fellow, and somehow I felt half ashamed of myself to think that I was playing rather a deceitful part with him, and it was scarcely up to the ideal of blockade running which I had pictured to myself, and I had a strong inclination to go straight on to New Orleans.

Still I consoled myself with the reflection that I had told him no untruth; my plan was to clear for New Orleans and sail for that port, and if I saw on the way a chance of putting into any of the blockaded Texas ports to do so; but failing that to continue on to New Orleans, and it was still undecided which I should do.

He took my word for nothing, but examined everything for himself. It was certainly a case of yellow fever with the captain, although of a mild type; but as this often makes fearful ravages among ships' crews, it was prudent that they should hold aloof from our vessel.

It continued a dead calm all day, and the two vessels lay helpless with sails flapping in sight of each other.

I would rather they had been a little farther apart, as some of the men in the boat had said, while in conversation with our men, that they thought we were worth watching; and I was satisfied that they were still keeping an eye upon us.

In the Gulf of Mexico, especially near the coast, the currents are strong and very uncertain. Owing to eddies in the Gulf Stream and changes of the wind, they are much affected

by heavy gales, and generally continue in the same direction of the gale for several days afterwards.

When a vessel is lying becalmed it is almost impossible to tell which way the current is setting, or whether there is any current if there is no soundings, land marks, or other fixed object, as everything goes the same way.

In this case I was wishful of knowing whether we were losing ground and drifting to the westward in the same direction as the late gale had blown, and there was no difficulty in the way as I saw by the chart that we were in soundings. We accordingly let down the lead and found bottom, and on paying out more line I found that we were drifting rapidly to the westward and of course the war vessel must be doing the same.

As we dragged the lead along I conceived the idea of slightly checking our drifting and allow the war vessel to drift away from us, and thus increase the distance between us without exciting suspicion.

We had on board two sets of old throat halyards, and getting an old piece of chain about thirty pounds weight, made fast the rope to it and let it down to the bottom, I knew that this would retard her drifting considerably, and I soon saw that it did as it brought her head to the current. She still drifted, but less rapidly, and to avoid any suspicion of being anchored, we kept shifting the rope to different parts of the vessel, causing her to swing broadside on or anyway, as she was doing before and as the war vessel herself was doing.

By sunset we could plainly see that the distance between the vessels was considerably increased.

The calm continued, and as soon as it darkened down, we got another rope and let down another weight, so as to anchor her completely, and as there was not a breath of wind throughout the night when day broke the war vessel was out of sight.

Throughout the whole of the following day it continued a dead calm, and we remained stationary, and getting a good observation I was enabled to determine our position minutely, and found we were about thirty miles S.S.W. of the mouth of Brazos River, and with anything like a good breeze we could make it easily in six hours; and we knew that the war vessel

must be a good long way to the westward, and it was almost impossible that she could get up in time to intercept us.

We knew that there was another war vessel, a barque, but she generally kept further out to sea, and it was probable that during the calm she might have also been carried to the westward by the current.

Nothing could be more favourable for us now if we had only a breeze, but it continued calm until sunset, when a breeze sprang up from the south-east, and the opportunity had come.

The whole coast being level prairie, and the line of beach being unbroken, there was no conspicuous landmarks to mark the mouth of the river, and it was a little difficult at sea to make it out, and no one on board, with the exception of Mr. P., had ever been there. He had been sea sick nearly all the time, but was now a little better, and we depended upon him to point out the mouth of the river.

There was a sand-bar as usual off the mouth of the river, the channel through which was somewhat crooked, and required a pilot. There was a pilot at the place who could take over at all times vessels drawing six feet of water or less, but it would be impossible to get him during the night.

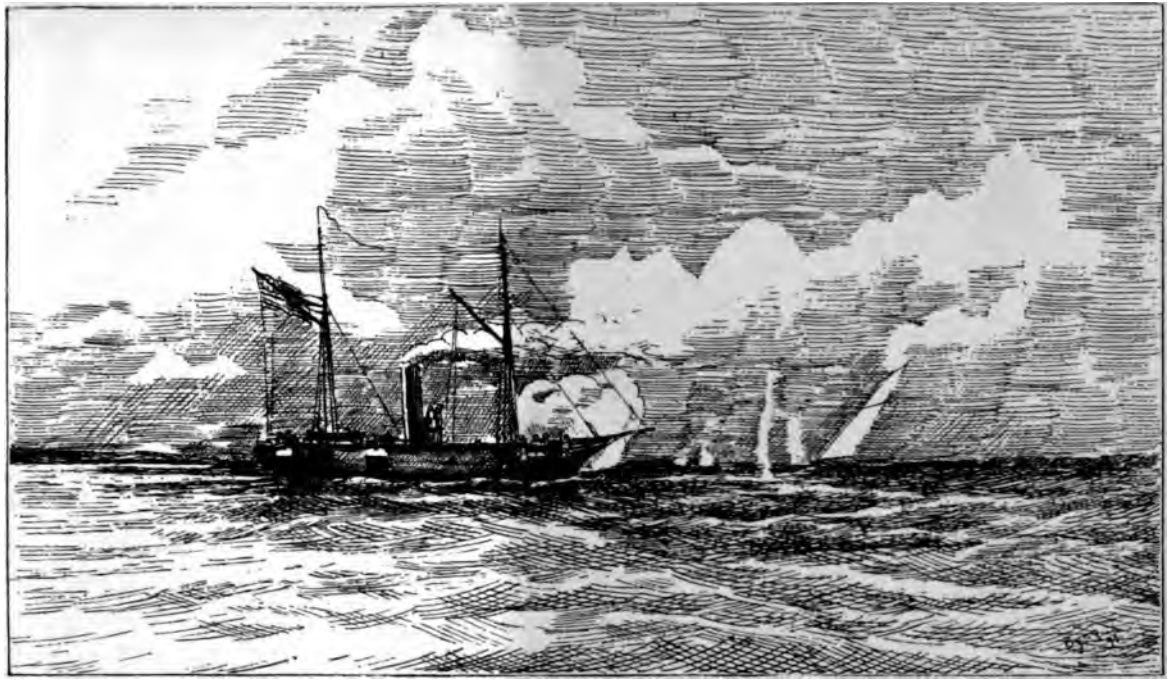
It was, therefore, resolved to run in and get within four or five miles of the coast about daybreak, and when the mouth of the river was made out we could make for it.

The great object was to make a good landfall, as a bad landfall often proved fatal to blockade runners.

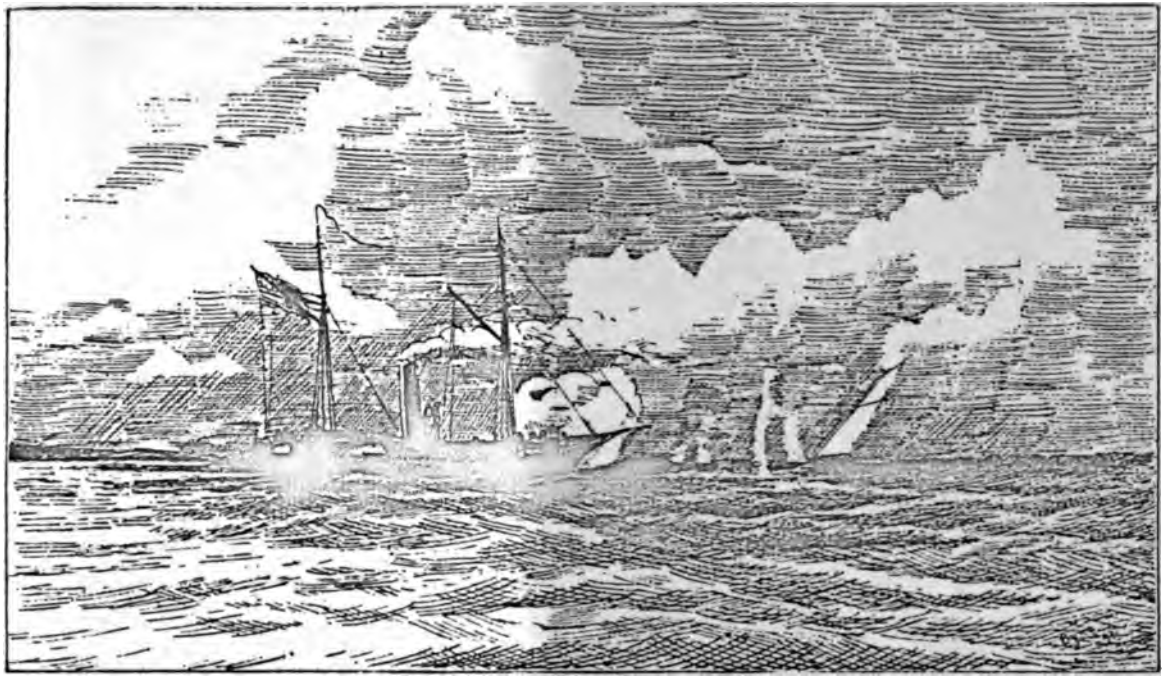
We took in the upper sails, put a reef in the mainsail and foresail, so as to run in under easy sail. This would time us better in making our landfall, and also make us less easy to be seen from a distance. This done we got in our temporary anchors—which were already dragging by the breeze—and proceeded, keeping a good luff, to allow for the leeway made by shortened sail, and also to keep us well to windward of the mouth of the river.

Just before daybreak we found we were in seven fathoms of water. This was well, and just as we wanted, and we kept on.

When daylight broke the forts, which had been recently erected at the mouth of the river, could be plainly seen about



A UNITED STATES GUN-BOAT.



A UNITED STATES GUN-BOAT.

five or six miles distant, and we were well to windward of them, but the breeze was light, and there was a slight haze over the water. No vessel was in sight.

We shook the reefs out of the mainsail and foresail, and was getting nearer to the forts, with all eyes turned in that direction, when the haze lifted, and the alarm was given of a steamer to the eastward close on.

Sure enough, about four miles to the eastward was a gunboat bearing down upon us, and before we had gone much farther there was a gun from her warning us to heave to. The shot, however, fell a long way short of us.

With the exception of myself no one on board had had any experience in that sort of thing, and the men looked at me and hesitated.

I told them there was not the least danger. From the distance the shot had fallen from us, it was impossible they could hit us before we got out of their reach. We were about the same distance from the forts as the gunboat was from us, and they would not venture to come much nearer the forts or into the shallow water, and I suggested to the mate to set the maintop-mast-staysail and gaff-topsail, and we would soon be beyond their reach.

Just then another gun was fired from the steamer, which came much nearer to us, but still fell short. This was followed by several others, one or two of which came pretty near us, and the crew were hesitating a little, when I was rejoiced to see the pilot's little boat dancing on the tops of the waves a short distance ahead. This reassured them, and we steered straight for her, and soon had the pilot and his man on board, and their boat towing astern.

The pilot was the very personification of an old, weather-beaten tar. He was an Englishman, and was exceedingly proud of his nationality. He wore a sou'wester, and his weather-beaten face was ribbed like the sea sand, and a grizzled beard curled round his mouth in round tufts exactly like barnacles, and he might well be called an old man of the sea.

When he came on board he immediately ordered the gaff-topsail and main-topmast-staysail to be set, and directed the

steersman; then, addressing all hands, he said: "I am pilot here; all vessels while crossing this bar, or under these forts, are under my command. My name is Lyon; I am Lyon by name and lion by nature; the British Lion they call me here, so now the British lion has got you in charge, and you are out of all danger."

We were, however, not quite so sure of that, the wind had got very light, and though the upper sails had increased her speed, her progress was not very great. The gunboat was still approaching and continuing to fire, her shot coming pretty close up, the pilot assuring us that she could come no closer in.

We had just entered the channel of the bar when a rechochetting shot, after striking the water several times, and sending the spray all over us, struck the vessel under the counter, about the water-line.

Is she making water? was the question. No appearance of water. All right.

We now saw the gunboat haul off and stand out to sea again, the breeze freshened a little, and we soon crossed the bar and were into the Brazos River.

The pilot said that the orders were that no vessels should lie near the forts, and that he would take us about three miles up the river, where we would be hid by the woods.

Of course there was a good deal of excitement at getting in; all hands were of course elated. Some people on the banks of the river were waving their handkerchiefs by way of congratulation, and the pilot, who was the hero of the hour, replied to them by setting forth how that the British lion had brought us in in defiance of the Yankees and their guns.

I now imagined that the worst of my troubles were over. I little thought my troubles were just going to begin.

For some distance up from the beach there was no trees, and the river flowed through an open prairie, but about three miles up from the mouth the forest began.

As we got near the woods the wind became very light, but it blew nearly fair up the river, and a bend in the river caused us to change tack by jibing.

Very shortly after changing tack we found that the vessel

was leaking very badly, and on examination we found that the water was rushing into her hold.

The shot had struck the vessel on the starboard side, and she being then on the starboard tack, the list which she had to port, kept the shot-hole above water, but as soon as she went on the port tack the list to starboard, small as it was, brought the hole down to the water-line, and the water rushed in, and as she settled deeper it came in faster.

The pilot knew of a shallow part on one side of the river where there was a sandbank, and on to this the vessel was run, not a moment too soon, as her hold was nearly half full of water, and she was settling down fast.

She was now careened over so as to get at the damage.

The ball had not gone through her, but being spent in its force, and coming in a line nearly fore and aft with the vessel, it had struck her in a slanting direction, splintering the plank, denting one of the timbers, and glancing off.

A quantity of tarred oakum was stuffed into the wound, and a piece of strong tarred canvas nailed securely over all, and the leak stopped.

The pumps were now set to work, and in a few hours the water was pumped out and the vessel floated off the bank.

It was now late in the day, and we moved to a suitable part of the river, where we made fast to the bank to lay up for the night, and give the crew some rest, of which they stood in need.

We had to proceed up the river about thirty miles to a place called Columbia, which was the port of the Brazos River, and from which place there was a railroad to Houston.

I now settled with the pilot, paying him his pilotage, and presenting him with a bottle of rum and a little coffee, which greatly pleased the old man, as such things were now great rareties in the Confederate States. He said it would remind him of good old British times. He added that he had served in the British Navy some forty years previous.

He took his leave, telling us to be of good cheer, that the British lion was with us, and we would soon recover, in spite of the Yankees, all the damage done by that shot.

I now began to survey the amount of damage done to the

cargo, and found that several large cases of matches were entirely destroyed, several small chests of tea, a good many sacks of coffee—the latter an article highly prized and in great demand. The rest of the cargo, consisting of barrels of salt pork, crates of earthenware, nails, and ironmongery, was not much damaged, but the loss was considerable, straitened as I was in circumstances.

Of course such a thing as insurance on either vessel or cargo was at those times never thought of.

The Brazos River was a larger and finer river than the Rio Grande; it was deeper and clearer, less tortuous, and flowed in more of a valley, with the banks on each side, in most places thickly wooded. There was rather larger tides here than at the Rio Grande, and the rise and fall could be felt up the river for thirty miles.

On the following day we proceeded up the river with the flood tide, and continued to work up with the tides, anchoring or making fast to the bank during the ebb, if the wind was not fair or sufficient to enable us to stem the current.

The captain, who had now recovered, and was up and moving about, and seemed to have been a little uneasy at the active part I had been taking, now began to interfere, and in a somewhat grumbling manner, asked me how many captains there was to be. One, I said, and if he now felt himself sufficiently recovered to take the command, I would have great pleasure in handing over to him the management of the vessel; but he must allow that the part which I had taken was called forth by necessity. He allowed that, and said he was now able to take charge of the vessel.

Although his illness had been no disadvantage to me, but rather opportune, as it gave me the opportunity of bringing in the vessel myself, and perhaps had been instrumental in causing the crew of the cruiser to hold aloof, I was very glad to see him well again, as I had some fears that a report might arise that a vessel had arrived with a case of yellow fever on board; and as it was the season of yellow fever, and it was not in Texas at the time, I did not know what action might be taken by the authorities.

While going up the river we met two schooners coming

down, loaded, on their way to sea, and they carried such large deck-loads of cotton that they looked like floating piles of cotton bales. I thought this scarcely safe, but was told afterwards, and found it to be true, that flat vessels of broad beam sailed much easier at sea with a deck-load.

At a place called Brayoria we passed a schooner named the *Catherine*, which had recently been sunk while going up the river by striking against the wreck of a sunken steamer. A party of men were working hard endeavouring to raise her. The captain of this vessel our captain seemed to know, and he inquired for him, but he was not with her.

We at length got to Columbia, and I went by railway to Houston to see the consignee and get the vessel entered.

The distance from Columbia to Houston was something over thirty-five miles by railway, but the trains were irregular and run only about twice or three times a week. The rolling stock was much dilapidated, and the locomotives worn out, and a speed of about fifteen miles per hour was about the utmost attained. The route was across a level prairie, on which were feeding large herds of cattle and horses, and the country in general had the appearance of being very fertile and finely diversified by clumps of wood here and there.

CHAPTER V.

State of things in Texas—Scarcity of gold and silver—A forced currency—Jobbers—Vessels at a premium—Devices to obtain possession of them—Descent of the Federal forces on the coast—The *Rob Roy* pressed into the Government service—Beginning of troubles—Blockade runners regarded with suspicion—Proof of fealty an important essential—Military rule.

WHEN I got to Houston and called upon the merchants to whom the cargo was to be consigned, I found that, by the custom-house regulations, the entering and clearing of the vessel must be done by the captain. I accordingly sent word to the captain to come and meet the consignee and have that done, while I started off to Galveston, where the British

consul was stationed, to report the arrival of the vessel and deposit the register and crew list.

Galveston, which is the principal seaport of Texas, is about seventy miles by railway from Houston, and is situated upon a sandy island about twenty-four miles long and about three miles broad. This island lies across the opening of a large bay which extends inland for nearly one hundred miles.

The principal entrance to this bay is by a narrow channel at the east end of the island, called Galveston Inlet, which will admit vessels about fourteen feet draught.

At the west end, and for more than half its length, the island is separated from the mainland only by a very narrow channel, the outlet to sea from which is not over four feet deep, and is called St. Louis Pass.

Across this channel the railway from Houston is, or was at that time, carried by trestle-work. Galveston, being situated on the inside of the island facing the bay, was therefore a fine, safe harbour for such vessels as could enter. It had evidently been a prosperous place, but it was now virtually in ruins, and the grass was growing in the streets. It had been taken by the Federal forces about a year previously, and had subsequently been retaken, after a desperate battle by the Confederates, under General Magruder. The temporary earthworks across the streets and passes, the torn-up wharves, and the sunken war vessels in the harbour and bay remained the same as at the close of the struggle. Some of the Federal war vessels which had been captured lay at anchor, among which was the paddle sloop *Harriet Lane*.

Few people except soldiers were to be seen in the streets, and the appearance of the place was cheerless and dismal in the extreme.

Outside of the shoals which compassed the entrance from sea lay the blockading fleet, and, so far as I could learn, no adventurous blockade runner had yet found its way in to break the monotony of the scene.

When I saw the consul, he received the papers, and noted the arrival in the ordinary way. He asked me which way I had come in. I said by the Brazos River. He then asked if any war vessels were stationed or anchored off the mouth of

that river. I said there was not. This he noted down. I do not think, however, that I told him anything about being fired upon by a passing steamer.

There was a good deal of discussion at that time about what constituted an effectively blockaded port.

One of the first things which I found on coming into the country was the entire absence of specie money. No gold or silver coin was in circulation, nothing to be seen or had but Confederate scrip, twenty or thirty dollars of which could be easily bought for one dollar in coin.

Of course it was the circulating medium, and suited for marketing and domestic purposes, and, being declared by the existing Government to be a legal tender, all articles were sold high in proportion, as no one dared to refuse it or say or do anything to depreciate its value.

Some, having implicit confidence in the ultimate success of the Confederate States, still valued it, and, as is too often the case in such times, the credulous masses were led away by political jobbers who heralded reports of great Confederate victories and the assurance of the speedy triumph of the South, and were ready to execute summary vengeance on any one who should in any way attempt to depreciate the value of the national currency, whilst they themselves were quietly using Confederate scrip to buy up specie, and hoarding the latter away.

The state of the country in general was wretched in the extreme, owing to the war and the blockaded ports.

Food of some kinds, the products of the place, was plentiful enough, such as Indian corn, fresh beef, and vegetables, and there was plenty of deer and other wild game, and near to the sea-coast there was abundance of fish and oysters. Some sugar was also produced, but not sufficient to supply the demand, much of it being sent to other parts of the confederacy. All other articles were at famine prices, or not to be had at all.

Texas being a new country and a semi-tropical climate, no advances whatever had been made in manufactures, and all northern products, iron, and all other kinds of manufactured *goods had hitherto* been imported; and being now shut off by

the blockade, the want was severely felt. Clothing of all kinds could only be obtained by the long and uncertain route across the plains from Mexico *vid* Brownsville.

Owing to the want of engineers' stores and material, the railway and steamboat traffic was much crippled, but, by vigorous exertions, it was still maintained to some extent.

Having got the vessel entered, the cargo was discharged and sent by railway to Houston, but it would be some time before the cargo of cotton could be got ready, as the cotton would have to be prepared for shipment. This was done by a very powerful cotton press, which compressed the bales into very small bulk, which enabled small vessels to stow away a large amount of cotton in very small space.

The vessel being now discharged, the first thing to be done was to have the damage done by the shot effectively repaired.

Columbia was a very small place, there not being altogether over fifty houses.

Some three or four blockade-running schooners were lying there discharging, or waiting for cargoes, but none of them carried a carpenter, and all classes of mechanics were very scarce, nearly all being in the army or employed at the Government works.

I was fortunate, however, in finding a man whom I had known in the Confederate army; he had served in the same brigade with me at Corinth, and afterwards was made a prisoner at Vicksburg, when that place was taken by the Federal forces. He had been parolled, and had not yet been exchanged, and of course could not be made to serve in the army. He was a good carpenter, and readily undertook to do the repairs, and the vessel was taken to a convenient place and careened over and the damage effectually repaired.

There was now very little to do. The captain seemed to have met up with some old friends here, and had made a large acquaintance, and spent most of his time on shore, leaving the mate in charge.

The latter, however, seemed to take pleasure in keeping the men employed, and, as he appeared to be a pretty good rigger, I thought this a good opportunity while we had the carpenter to get the masts shortened, and this was set about.

The desired length was cut off at the bottom, a new heel made to fit the step in the keelson, the wedging at the deck slackened, and the masts gently worked down into the step, trimmed, and then wedged up lightly, and the rigging set up again, and the vessel was greatly improved in her appearance.

About this time Captain B., of the sunken schooner, *Catherine*, which we had passed at Brazoria, was very much in company with our captain. His story seemed to me rather a singular one. His vessel had struck against a sunken wreck while coming up the river, and had sunk to her deck rails near the bank. There was on board of her one of the owners, who was acting as owner and supercargo, but, not being a British subject, his name was not on the register, but he held a power of attorney over the vessel.

Between this person and Captain B. there was a dispute. Captain B. maintained that, from his authority as captain, he could hold a survey on the vessel, and have her condemned and abandoned, the wreck sold, and he and the crew paid their wages, &c., out of the proceeds.

He accordingly took steps to this effect, and, after some kind of survey, the vessel was sold by Captain B. to a Mr. L., and Mr. L. had appointed Captain B. as captain under his ownership.

Against this the original owner protested, and denied that the vessel was a wreck, or had been lawfully condemned. He was ready to pay Captain B. and crew their wages, and furnish accommodation for them, and insisted on them remaining by the vessel until she was raised. He ignored the sale of the vessel, and held on to her, employed men, and was getting her raised; but, as Captain B. had abandoned the vessel, he now refused to allow him to come near her.

Owing to the haziness about the ownership of the vessel and the disordered state of the civil authorities in Texas at the time, it was not easy to obtain justice by legal means, and it seemed to be one of those cases where possession is nine points of the law.

I saw that Captain B. did not like to say much to our captain in my hearing, but I heard rumours privately that he was going to wait until the vessel was raised, and then he

would make an attempt to get possession of her by force if necessary.

Whether Captain J. had promised to assist him or not, I do not know, but he seemed to sympathize much with him, and they had much private talk together.

I also imagined that Captain J. was beginning to assume a somewhat arbitrary position, for he spent most of his time on shore in company with Captain B. and Mr. L., the new owner of the *Catherine*, and stood high upon his dignity as captain of the *Rob Roy*, and seemed quite to ignore the presence of any owners.

I did not altogether like the appearance of things, and I was wishful to get loaded and away to sea, but in this I was suddenly doomed to an unexpected disappointment.

I went up to Houston to do what I could in pushing on matters and getting the cotton sent down.

When I got there I found the town jubilant over a victory gained over the Federals at Sabine Pass, a place about 60 miles to the eastward of Galveston, where the Federals had attempted to land with a strong force, but had been repulsed with heavy loss and two of their light draught gunboats captured by the Confederates.

A part of the cotton had been got ready and was to be sent off the following day, when Captain J. came up and reported to me that the *Rob Roy* had been taken possession of by the Government for war purposes to do duty at Fort Velasco at the mouth of the Brazos River.

They had given no notice whatever, but come and inspected her, and immediately brought one of the Quartermaster's steamers and towed her away.

I knew well the arbitrary acts of the Government, but I scarcely understood why they should seize and press into service a *bona-fide* foreign vessel, when other vessels lay there which were known to be the property of Confederate citizens.

I immediately went off to the Forts, to inquire as to the cause of the seizure and what they were going to do with the vessel.

I knew that blockade runners were sometimes regarded

being owned by, and in league with the Yankees, and had no love for the South, their object being only to make money, or perhaps a worse purpose by acting as spies.

Although I knew that no suspicion of that kind could attach to me, still reports of that kind were sometimes got up against vessels by political demagogues and grog-shop loafers in order to extort blackmail; or at the instance of speculating sharpers, with the view of ultimately getting the vessel into their hands.

I knew also that some proof of fealty towards the Confederate States was a very powerful factor in such cases; but up to this time I had kept my former connection with the Confederate States secret, and acted entirely as a foreigner and a stranger.

When I got to the Forts, I found they were preparing the vessel to carry a pile-driver to drive piles in the channel way to obstruct the entrance.

I called upon the commander of the Forts, and complained that the *Rob Roy* should have been selected for this purpose when so many vessels the property of Confederate citizens were lying idle, and desired to know if there was anything against the vessel which led to her seizure.

The colonel commanding—Evans I think was his name—was a very gentlemanly man. He said that so far as he knew, there was nothing whatever against the vessel or her owners.

The fact was that they had been apprized that a large Federal force was meditating a descent upon the coast. They had made an attack at Sabine Pass, where they had been repulsed. Where they would make the next attack was uncertain, but it was thought very probable that they would make an attack at Brazos River, and therefore it was necessary to strengthen the position; and it had been suggested to drive piles and place obstructions in some parts of the channel so as to make it more intricate, and bring the entrance more direct under the sweep of the guns of the Forts. To effect this it was necessary to have a handy and suitable vessel, and therefore for the public good, one had to be impressed into the service and the *Rob Roy* had been selected as the most suitable; but, added he, "You will be paid in full *for your vessel.*"



In Confederate money I was about to say, but I knew that although that would be what I would be paid with, and it would be of no more value than waste paper to me, it would not be judicious to make the remark,

I said that no payment they could make me, could compensate me for the loss of my vessel situated as I was; and trusted that they might see their way to make some other arrangements, and let me have my vessel back.

He replied, that, for himself, he did not see any use the vessel would be to them, but she had been sent there for the use of the Engineers at the Forts, and that he could not give her up without an order from the Quartermaster-General or from General Magruder.

I then set off to Galveston to lay the matter before the British Consul.

When I saw that gentleman and reported the matter, he was a little surprised, but said he would scarcely be much astonished at anything these people—the Confederates—would do. They were now desperate, and would not let any regard for international law or individual rights interfere with any project they meant to carry out. If they succeeded in gaining their independence they would be able to compensate and make it right with all parties, and if they did not succeed, there would be no one to fall back upon; but as they had invited and wished to encourage foreign nations to run into their ports and trade with them, he thought such an act would tend very much to discourage such trade. He would, however, see General Magruder and reason the matter with him.

General Magruder who was more of a soldier than a purveyor or a diplomatist, was away in the field with the troops, and the Consul said it might be a few days before he could see him; but I might come back in about a week and he would let me know the result of the interview.

After waiting a week I went back and saw the Consul, who told me that he had seen General Magruder, and that the latter had promised that he would inquire into the matter,

up. "But," continued the Consul, "I have had no reply from the General, and in the midst of this great hubbub he may have forgotten all about it. I think," said he, "the best way for you to do is to go and see him yourself; I will give you a letter to him."

I agreed to this, and he sat down and wrote a letter to the General which he handed to me, and told me that the proper place for me to see him would be at the headquarters of the Quartermaster-General.

I accordingly went there. I knew there would likely be a little difficulty in getting an interview with the General, but I was determined to push my way.

I was met by a number of subordinate officers in uniform, and when I said I wished to see General Magruder, there was a general titter among them.

A newly fledged sub-lieutenant came up, and, in a slightly ironical tone, asked me if my business with the General was very important.

I said it was to me at least.

He then said, in the same ironical tone, that if I would do him the honour to give him my name, he might be able to attend to my case.

I directed my eye to his plain shoulder-strap, and asked if he was the Quartermaster-General.

He did not seem to understand my meaning, but an older officer of higher rank looked up from his desk and asked if I wanted to see the Quartermaster-General.

I said it was General Magruder I had come to see, but I presumed the business was connected with the Quartermaster-General's department.

"I am the Quartermaster for the district," said he. "But——" Just then the door flew open, and a stout, bronzed-looking officer came bouncing in, who, going up to the officer who had last spoken, said:

"Well, Major, I will bid you good-bye, I am off; see and take care of yourselves; and give those Yankees a warm reception should they attempt to land in Texas."

It struck me I had heard the rough voice before, but his *face was turned* away from me and towards the officer who

had risen from his desk to shake hands with him. And I was watching him attentively, when he happened to look round, and I recognized an officer whom I had formerly known as a captain in the 2nd Texas Regiment.

"What the devil are you doing here?" he cried, as he ran towards me and grasped my hand, which he shook until I thought he would have wrenched my arm from its socket.

"Why! You two seem to be acquainted," said the Quartermaster.

"I should say we were," said he, "and we ought to be. We were both left wounded on the field at Corinth and were together prisoners in the Yankee hospital." *

He then referred to some of the incidents which had taken place at that time, and said that he had got exchanged shortly after me. He had now been home on a short furlough, and was just on his way back to join his regiment.

He was sorry he could not have a longer talk with me as he had to go, so he bade me good-bye, and commended me to his friend the Quartermaster and all the other officers, saying they were to show me all the kindness they could and charge it to his account.

This was a most fortunate meeting for me, and I was quite astonished at the great effect which this little incident had upon the demeanour of the officials towards me, and I saw that any one who had taken an active part in the Confederate service was held in very high esteem, and that even a private soldier who had been wounded in battle, ranked morally higher than a field officer in the Home Guard.

As soon as my friend—who was now a Major—had taken his leave, the other Major—the District Quartermaster—in the most kindly way asked me what I wished to obtain; and having told him, he said he would go with me at once to the Quartermaster-General, who would get me an audience of General Magruder.

I was very soon introduced to the Quartermaster-General, and by him ushered into the presence of General Magruder to whom I handed the Consul's letter.

Having read the letter and asked me a few questions about

* "*Life in the Confederate Army*," p. 421.

my services in the army, he directed the Quartermaster-General to write an order to Colonel Evans, that the British schooner *Rob Roy* might be given up to her owner, if the same could be done without material detriment to the public service.

I was allowed to be the bearer of the despatch, and I lost no time in getting back to the Forts, and handing it to Colonel Evans. When he read the order, he said he saw nothing in the way of giving up the vessel, but he must first consult with the Engineer officers.

After a consultation with the Engineer officers, the Colonel told me that the vessel would be released, and as a steamer would be going to Columbia the following day, he would order that she should be towed up to that place.

The captain and crew being still on board of the vessel, I left them to attend to her and went off to Houston to expedite the sending off of the cargo of cotton.

I found that part of the cargo of cotton which had not been already compressed had been thrown aside to make room for the pressing of another consignment, and would have now to wait its turn. The consignee, however, promised to get it ready as soon as possible.

I then returned to Columbia, but only to be apprised of another misfortune.

The vessel had been towed up, but she had met with an accident on the way and been very much damaged. The rails had been cut on both sides to allow the pile-driver to rest across her deck, and on coming up the river in tow of the steamer, she had come into collision with another vessel and the rail on the one side from where it was cut was carried away clean to the stern, and the stanchions damaged.

I was glad, however, to get the vessel back in any condition, and my next object was to get her repaired.

I found my old friend the carpenter who had done the last repairs ready to undertake the work, but the difficulty would be to get wood.

There was plenty of wood in the country of the best kind, *but, like nearly everything else, it had all been taken possession of by the Government.* There was a saw-mill about four

miles from the place, and there I went. I found there plenty of fine oak most suitable, sawn up and seasoned; but the owner told me that he could not allow a bit of wood to go from the place without an order from the Brigadier-General commanding the district.

The headquarters of this officer was at Houston, and to that place I must go. There was not going to be any train to that place for a day or two, so I took horse and rode across the prairie.

There was no Brigadier-General at the time, but one Colonel L. was acting.

Colonel L. had been a civilian, an officer of volunteers, and had attained the rank of Colonel since the war broke out.

As I knew that—where not known—foreigners or traders were regarded with distrust, I got Mr. P., my partner's representative, who was staying in Houston at the time, and who was a native of the place, and whose fealty could not be questioned, to accompany me.

When we went to headquarters, unfortunately for us, there was at the time a commotion arising out of some drunken spree, in which several officers were implicated, and several of them were there in a half-drunk state, and there was high words and the appearance of something like a brawl.

Colonel L. seemed exceedingly annoyed and irritated, and appeared to become more so on seeing strangers coming in and witnessing the scene.

I thought it not a favourable opportunity to apply, and motioned to Mr. P. to come away out; but the Colonel had seen us, and called us back, saying: "Here what do you want? I will attend to your case."

I said I only wanted an order to get some wood from a saw-mill to repair my vessel, which had been damaged while in the service of the Government. Probably the last words he did not hear in the general uproar.

"I can't give you any order to get wood," said he, "without some proper recommendation. I can't take the Government wood and give to every vessel that comes in, that we know nothing about."

I was *about to explain* the matter, when half-a-dozen voices, *excited with drink, shouted* out—

"Don't give it, Colonel! Don't give it! These blockade runners are just a set of Yankee spies, who are carrying the cotton out of the country to supply the Yankees."

This so irritated Mr. P. that he turned round upon them and said that whoever accused us of such a thing lied. Whereupon a half-drunk captain drew his dagger and ran at Mr. P. Colonel L., however, seized the captain and pushed him back. But Mr. P. had only made matters worse. I still endeavoured to explain the matter, but to little purpose.

Colonel L. said something to his quartermaster, who was standing by, more than half drunk. The latter was most abusive, and said he would not give wood to any one who had done nothing for the Confederate States, and who he believed to be a worthless speculator and an enemy of the Confederate States, who wished to carry out cotton to supply the Yankees.

I now got irritated in my turn, and I replied with some warmth that I had done more for the Confederate Government than ever he would dare to do. I could show on my body the scars of wounds received in battle in the Confederate service, and only two days before I had produced testimony of this to the satisfaction of General Magruder, and to him I would now go and apply for what I wanted, and also report the reception I had got here.

There was a silence all round for a few moments, and a look from one to another, which was soon followed by an ironical laugh, and some sneering expressions, such as: "A very fine story if it was true; but I don't believe a word of it."

We left the room and retired into the ante-room, intending to let matters quiet down a little before we said anything more, as, notwithstanding what I had said, I had no desire to incur the delay and disagreeability of going again to General Magruder, if there was any possibility of getting what I wished here.

I was thinking of what I would do when I noticed a young lieutenant, who was lying stretched his full length upon a bench, regarding me very attentively. I thought I had seen the face before, but ere I could remember where, he sprang up and ran towards me.

"*Beg your pardon,*" said he, "but did not you once belong *to the Rifle Company* of the 3rd Louisiana Regiment?"

"I did," said I; "and you are Tom M., of the Moorehouse Guards; but what are you doing here?"

"Oh, you know I was wounded at Pea Ridge," said he, "and sent home, and when I recovered I joined De Bray's mounted Regiment, and I am in that now."

"Then you have no connection with those fellows?" said I, referring to the officers in the adjoining room.

"Oh no," said he. "I was at a ball in Houston last night, where I met up with some of them, and I was just having a few hours' sleep; but how came you to be here? What are you about now?"

I gave him a short account of my movements from the time I had last seen him, and, remembering the good effects of meeting my old friend the Major at Galveston, I said I was glad that I had met him, as he might be able to assist me a little in the position I was in.

He said he would be most happy if he could, but he feared his influence would not be great. He said that Colonel L. was a very gentlemanly man, though he had no great experience as an officer, but he seemed to have a pretty rough crowd about him.

I said that influence was not required; I only wished him to testify to what he knew of me and my services in the army.

He said he would do that with pleasure, and we went together into the room, where the Colonel seemed to be trying to settle some dispute or quarrel amongst the officers, and there was a good deal of loud talking.

I went up to him and said, "Colonel, I mean to apologize if I have been out of order in making the request, or said anything offensive; but here is a gentleman, a Confederate officer, who can tell you something of me."

Lieutenant M. then said that he had known me since the commencement of the war, that I had served with him in the 3rd Louisiana Regiment throughout the whole of the Western Campaign under Generals McCulloch, Price, and Van Dorn, and that for bravery and zeal in the Confederate cause I was second to none. He had known me up to the battle of Pea Ridge, where he himself was wounded and invalided home.

"*So far so good*," said the Colonel, and, turning to me, he *asked under what circumstances* I came to be here now.

"Because," said I, "I was afterwards badly wounded at the battle of Corinth, and rendered unfit for service in the field; but being still desirous of serving the Confederate States, I had made an attempt at blockade running, and had brought a cargo into Texas; and the Government having had the use of my vessel for some operations at the mouth of the Brazos River, she had got damaged, and what I now asked for was permission to purchase wood to repair her. In saying this I daresay I overpictured my zeal a little, but then such were the times, and a point had to be made.

The Colonel stood silent for a few moments, and then said, reflectively, "That alters the case, that alters the case very much: but of course I knew nothing of you; and I almost think I owe you an apology, for we owe respect and gratitude to any one who has shed his blood in the Confederate cause."

"You owe me no apology, Colonel; but that man there does," said I, pointing to the Quartermaster, who was standing by, and had heard what was said.

"Apology!" roared the inebriated Major; "you shall have a thousand apologies," as he roughly seized hold of my hand, "and you shall not go from here until you have had a drink with me."

There was now a change in the tone all round, and they were as loud in their laudations as they had before been in their abuse; and I was now as much in danger of being hurt by overkindness as I had before been from contumely.

Colonel L., however, called me aside, and said he would give me the order I wanted and let me get away. He asked me to slip away as quietly and as quickly as I could, as his officers were *all off their usual.* He was ashamed that any one should have witnessed such a scene at headquarters; his officers were all sober men enough, but there had been a ball last night in Houston, which had set them all wrong.

He then wrote out an order to the manager of the saw-mill to deliver to me what wood I required to repair my vessel, and I slipped away quietly, and was soon upon my horse speeding across the prairie on my way to Columbia, thinking how strange it was that within three days two instances had happened of

my meeting with old friends at a time so opportune, and so advantageous to me.

I saw, however, that the testimony of my former services in the Confederate army was a great recommendation to me among the officials, and, as they held absolute power at that time, I must make the most of it.

I got the wood I required, and the carpenter proceeded with the repairs, and the vessel was again in good order, and ready to take in cargo.

CHAPTER VI.

More troubles—Sinking of the schooner—Captain B. sympathizes and proffers his advice—Kindness of Captain Downs—Strange conduct of Captain J. —A plot to get possession of the vessel—A new partnership formed—The sunken vessel raised—A personal encounter—A good riddance.

CAPTAIN J., who had become much more respectful since the vessel had been pressed by the Government, spoke to me about the stowing of the vessel. He said that they were a very poor lot of stevedores at this place, and the stowing of cotton in a vessel was a very important matter. He said he had followed the business of a stevedore in New Orleans, and understood it well, and if I would pay him the stevedore's charge he would stow the vessel much better than I could get it done by the stevedores of the place.

I had reason to know that the stevedores of the place were not very proficient, and I agreed.

The cargo was sent down, and the stowing of the vessel was proceeded with. The captain, however, still spent the greater part of his time on shore, and the stowing was done by the mate. The latter, however, having been the captain's assistant in the business in New Orleans, I thought he might be as well qualified as the captain and more zealous, although stowing cotton in vessels was a thing which I yet knew but little about. The cotton bales, which were already pressed to a great density, were squeezed tight into the hold by means of screw

amount of cotton which they could stow into a vessel of a certain size or tonnage.

The hold was stowed, and the mate boasted of the quantity he had stowed away in it. Of course I was pleased with the carrying capacity of the vessel; and the placing of the deck load was begun.

Having ascertained the total quantity she should take, I set off with the captain to Houston to get the vessel cleared. This being done, I went to Galveston to finish up with the Consul and get the vessel's papers.

I now hastened back to Columbia in high spirits, thinking that all my troubles on land were now past, and that we would soon be on the honest salt water again. When I got to Columbia I found that Captain J. had not yet got back from Houston, and the station-master coming up to me said, "You have certainly had bad luck with your vessel." Wondering if there had been some other seizure or detention, I said—

"Why? What is the matter now?"

"Do you not know," said he, "that she is sunk?"

I could not believe it, and hastened down to the river bank, and there sure enough she lay sunk, with only the tops of her rails above water.

The mate was in a very excited state, and roughly driving the men about; but he could in no way account for how this had happened. He said that when they stopped work on the previous evening all the cargo was on board, the vessel was making no water. She was pumped out as usual, and after one or two strokes she was dry, and the pumps sucked, and all was well. About midnight he was awakened by the water rushing into the cabin. He jumped up, called the men, and with some assistance from the other vessels got the deck load off and rolled ashore, and worked at the pumps, but it was of no use, she settled gradually down. He carried the throat halliards from the mast-heads to trees on the bank to keep the vessel upright, and prevent her from falling outward into the river. This was all he could do; as to the cause of her sinking *no one could tell.*

I could scarcely realize my unfortunate position. Every-

thing I possessed was sunk in the river. I had not even a change of clothing—all had gone down in the vessel.

Several vessels were lying near, loaded and ready for sea, and some new arrivals had been within the last few days, and the captains were gathered round, each giving his opinion as to the cause of the disaster. Among them was Captain B. of the sunken schooner *Catherine*, who expressed his great sympathy with me in my misfortune, but gave it as his opinion that I had been deceived when I purchased the vessel, and that I would find that she was not such a good vessel as I had supposed, and he believed she was not butt-bolted, and that while engaged driving piles at the mouth of the river some of the butts had got started, and had now opened, and that was the cause of her sinking.

I said he was wrong in his conjectures; I had thoroughly inspected her hull, it was strongly built, and butt-bolted throughout.

He said, Well, it was a great misfortune, and he was exceedingly sorry for me, as he feared it would be a very difficult and expensive matter to raise the vessel in the present state of things in the country; and perhaps the authorities would declare the wreck an obstruction in the river, and come upon me for damages. He said he would not pretend to advise me, but if he was in my place he would sell the vessel at once as she lay for anything he could get for her, and get away out of the place, in case of any action taken by the authorities.

I must say I did not like this man, and I thought I perceived his drift. I turned away from him, saying at the same time that I was much obliged to him for his sympathy.

"Yes," said a little old man named Captain Downs, who was standing by, "and I have read something about sympathy of the same kind being given by friends to a good old gentleman named Job, who, after all, got over his troubles and came out all right. So, keep heart, Mr. W., you may come out all right yet. I *know* how you must feel; but, as it is now getting *dark, and nothing* can be done to-night, come away with me. *My vessel, like myself*, is very small, and every hole in her

crammed up with cotton, ready for sea; but I have a room on shore, so come over and stay with me to-night."

The crew having made a sort of house for themselves among the cotton bales, on shore, I gave them money to get some provisions, and told them to make the best of it until to-morrow, when we would see what could be done.

Captain Downs was well known among the vessels and inhabitants of the place as a rather rough and comical old fellow, and in appearance he somewhat resembled the old pilot at the bar. He was fond of joking and witticisms, and seemed happy. I much esteemed his kindness that night, and I found that a finer sentiment existed under the rough exterior. I was too much troubled in mind to sleep, and he passed much of the night in relating to me his history. It had been an eventful and sad one, and thickly dotted with misfortune. His wife and children had been drowned at sea, and he was left alone in the world. He had no share in the vessel he commanded. She was a very small thing, about twenty tons. He said she was large enough for him, as he had little to live for. He said he had adopted this rough and jocular habit to drown his cares and shroud his melancholy, as he thought it a better way than to drown his cares in drink, and he had got into the habit of it and could not give it over.

I approved of his method of drowning care, and said he need have no desire to give it over. It was rather an accomplishment, and I only wished I could adopt it. "Pooh!" said he, "what business have you to talk about cares; you have no family bereavements or domestic afflictions, and a young man like you, with no wife or family depending upon you, has no right to grieve over a mere pecuniary loss; you have the world before you, and it ought to stimulate you to further exertion. Remember that the ways of Providence are wonderful, and who knows but this accident may turn out for your good in the end." This observation cheered me, and I wished for daylight to take action in some way.

As soon as daylight came in, Captain Downs went with me

iron ballast in her—nothing but cotton, and although it had been compressed and was very heavy, still it was lighter than water, and she ought to rise with very little assistance.

He advised me to set about raising her at once. He was loaded, and was going to proceed down the river the same day, otherwise he might have lent me some assistance. He said he would give me a quiet hint, and that was not to place much value on Captain B.'s sympathy, his advice, or himself either, hinting at the same time that he might have an eye to getting hold of the vessel.

In the meantime, Captain J.. had arrived, and had learned of the disaster. He did not seem much concerned, but thought the vessel might be raised easily enough, but asked that I should allow some whisky for the men while engaged at the work. I feared that there had been already a little too much of that article, and it might have had something to do with the sinking of the vessel. However, I agreed to allow a little under proper restriction.

It was then arranged that the captain should get the sails unbent, the topmast sent down, the anchors and chains ashore, and the vessel lightened as much as possible, and I would go at once to Houston and see the consignee and report the disaster, and ask him to advance me some assistance and direct me where I might procure strong tackling. The consignee, who had never before had much to do with shipping matters, hesitated about risking any advance, but said he would think about it. He, however, put me in the way of getting tackling, which I got and sent to the vessel, and I requested Mr. P., my partner's representative, to call upon some of the other merchants and see if they would take a share in the vessel, and advance some assistance. He did, and found that some of them would be willing to do so. I then returned to Columbia.

The place where the vessel lay sunk was on the east, or Houston, side of the river, near the railway terminus; but there were no houses on that side, the small village of Columbia being on the west side.

When I got to the vessel, I found her as I had left her. The captain had taken the sails off her and taken them

across the river to Columbia, but had done nothing more. The men said that the captain and the mate had taken up their abode at a house across the river in Columbia. The captain had also been writing out a protest, and had got some of the men to witness it. He had also held a survey on the vessel, and she had been condemned and abandoned, and the crew were to be paid off. I asked whom he had got to make a survey of the vessel. They said it had been Captain B. and two other men. I asked the crew if they wished to abandon the vessel. They said the captain and mate had abandoned her, and they had to obey.

Just then the ferry-boat came across, bringing Captain J., the mate, Captain B., and several others, among whom was Mr. L., *soi-disant* owner of Captain B.'s sunken vessel.

Captain J. came up to me with great formality, and said that he had found it to be his duty as captain of the vessel, in behalf of the crew and for the benefit of all concerned, to have a survey of the vessel. He had called qualified men for the purpose, and this was their report, which was read over, declaring the vessel to be a total wreck, and the captain and crew were justified in abandoning her; that he found a gentleman—Mr. L.—who was willing to purchase the vessel as she lay for the sum of 12,000 dollars in Confederate money, which was about equal to 600 dollars in specie; and, as the gentlemen who had made the survey considered this an ample price, he had decided to accept it on behalf of all concerned.

He spoke in such a formal and consequential way, with Mr. L. and Captain B. standing at his back, that I scarcely knew whether to fly in a rage or laugh at the proceedings; and seeing the station-master standing near, I asked him to step up and witness what was said. I then said to Captain J.—

"Do you wish to abandon the vessel, and do you refuse to do anything in the way of saving her?"

"I have abandoned her," said he.

"And you, too, mate," said I, "do you refuse also?"

"I do refuse," said the mate.

"Very good," said I, looking towards the station-master, who had heard the replies.

I then told the captain that as he had decided to leave the

vessel, he should do so; that he and all the crew should be paid off to the full amount of their claims against the vessel at the office of the British Consul, and as that gentleman should direct—that was all he had to do with the matter. As regarded the owners and all parties concerned, they were all on the spot, and did not require him to act for them; and as for that precious document called a survey, he might take it to them that advised him, and they might keep reading it over for their amusement. In the meantime, I forbade him to take anything further to do with the vessel, but to meet me at the Consulate.

The crew, who were standing by, asked me if they would get their wages without going all the way to Galveston to the Consulate. I said, oh, yes, if no dispute arose, I was going now to Houston with the train, and would return with money to pay off all who chose to sign off the articles. The captain and his friends stood aside, seemingly abashed and disappointed, and in earnest consultation; while I turned and walked slowly towards the station, ruminating on how I would raise the money to pay them off, and calculating how much it would take.

Shortly afterwards I saw Captain B. leave his friends and come towards me.

"Just a word with you, Mr. W.," said he, as he came up.

"Say on," said I.

"Of course," said he, "it is none of my business; but I rather think you will have more difficulty in raising that schooner than you think, and don't you think you might consider Mr. L.'s offer; perhaps he would go a little higher. Between you and me, I have no doubt but he would—or perhaps you might say what you would take for the vessel as she lies."

"I am going to Houston now," said I, "to get money to pay off the captain and crew and all claims against the vessel, and when I have done that, if Mr. L. has any proposal to make, he can make it to me direct."

"That is the best way, Mr. W.," said he. "That will be the best way, and I have no doubt that you and he will come to some arrangement," and he turned and went away.

I said this, not that I had the slightest intention of dealing with them, but that I did not wish to come to open war with them, seeing that I had not a single friend in the place, and the almost total absence of anything like law or police supervision; and, as the vessel was lying at their mercy, I did not know what prank they might play with her, and I knew that if the tackles from the mast-heads were cast off she would fall outwards into the deeper part of the river, and then the difficulties in raising her would be increased tenfold.

Just before the train started, one of the men named Fred, whom the mate had been beating and ill-treating, came cautiously to me, and said that he and George would stay by me if I would pay off the captain and the mate, and take command of the vessel myself. These were the two men who were shipped at Matamoras, and did not come from the barque with the captain and the mate. They were good, faithful men, but not very strong or robust. He said, however, that they dare not let their intentions be known, or they would be sure to be assaulted and ill-treated. I said I would make it all right with them, but cautioned them to say nothing about it, but stay close by the vessel until I returned.

When I got to Houston I met Mr. P., who introduced me to the house of R. and D. G. M. and Co. They named a certain sum as the value of the vessel as she lay, and they would advance money to pay off the captain and the crew, and give assistance to get the vessel raised and repaired, and they would become shareholders in the vessel to the amount of the money advanced. They insisted, however, that Captain J. should be got rid of, as they had rather a bad opinion of him, and they were quite willing that I should take the command myself.

The sum fixed as the value of the vessel was not great, but the vessel was in a precarious state, and I was glad to get backing of any kind, and I agreed to their terms. I got the money and went to Columbia, and called the crew up to the railway station, paid them to their satisfaction in presence of witnesses, and having the crew list with me, they all signed. The mate also came, and he was settled with satisfactorily, but Captain J. did not put in an appearance.

Several vessels were loaded and dropping down the river at the time, and the discharged crew all got berths on them, and left, with the exception of the two men who had agreed to remain with me. I sent for Captain J., and requested to settle with him on the spot, if we could agree; if not, at the office of the British Consul. He said he would have nothing to do with the British Consul. He asserted that he was still master of the vessel, and that I had no right to take the vessel out of his hands, and that he would maintain possession of her unless I would pay him a large sum by way of compromise.

I said I would pay him his wages in full from the time he joined the vessel until the time he abandoned her and refused to work; I would also pay him board wages from the time the vessel had sunk; I would also allow him the bonus for the inward trip, and I would pay him for stowing the cargo as I had agreed, deducting, of course, all monies already advanced; I would also allow him the price of a passage back to Matamoras, where he had joined the vessel, although I said he was not entitled to that as he had deserted the vessel when she was in port and himself in no danger.

He refused to accept my offer, but went away muttering threats of vengeance against me if I did not pay him his demands, and declaring that he would hold possession of the vessel.

I saw that he had been drinking much of late, and constantly in the company of Captain B. and other men, who were plying him with drink and inciting him to mischief, by assuring him that he as captain had full power over the vessel, and that he had the right to sell her, as Captain B. had sold the *Catherine* when she sunk, to Mr. L.

By this time Mr. P. had met with a Captain S., of Galveston, a stalwart man both in body and resources, a thorough Southern steamboat man, who said he would undertake the raising of the vessel, and with whom I made an agreement.

He soon came with his appliances—large blocks and tackles, and some large pumps—and the Messrs. M. had agreed to supply several yokes of oxen, and as many negroes as was desired, from a plantation of theirs near Columbia.

Captain S. began, by taking the anchor chains, passing them under the vessel's bottom and bringing them up over the outside, and making them fast one to each mast at the deck, the other ends passing under the bottom were carried ashore, and to them were attached powerful tackles made fast to trees high up the bank, while from the mast-heads were tackles to keep the vessel upright and prevent her tilting outwards.

One or more of the yokes of oxen were attached to one of the falls, and by a steady pull one end of the vessel was raised a little. What was gained was retained and made fast, and the oxen applied to the other tackle, and the two ends were raised alternately.

Had the bank of the river been solid and sloping towards the middle, the raising would soon have been effected; but unfortunately where the vessel lay it was deep, and the bank soft and almost perpendicular, and as the vessel was brought against the soft bank it settled down, and the vessel sank back again. We saw that it would take a little time, but by perseverance we would accomplish it.

In the meantime Captain J. and his friends had thought of trying a policy which was sometimes adopted in places where civil law had little control, and that was to get public opinion on their side; and there were usually a number of loafers about those small places who, on being plied with drink were ready to take part on either side; they probably thought this might be of material advantage to them in getting possession of the *Catherine* and also the *Rob Roy*. But although there was the usual bar-room in the place which the captain and his friends frequented much, there was not among the inhabitants much drunkenness or many loafers. The military rule and the Conscript Act had made the latter somewhat scarce in public places.

There was one man—a Mr. H.—who acted as a kind of messenger for some of the officials, with whom Captain J. had become exceedingly friendly. This man was a native of Cork, in Ireland, and a townsman of Captain J. He was a young man, seemingly of fair intelligence, much presumption, and affected to have some influence in the place, and was remarkable in his hatred to everything British.

This man, Captain J., Captain B., and Mr. L. were constantly together, and watching every movement at the vessel. They were, of course, on the opposite side of the river from where the vessel lay, and did not attempt to interpose, but indulged in many remarks, declaring that we would never raise the vessel, but make a wreck of her; and Captain J. applied at the civil court to get a decree against the vessel and get possession of her in respect of his claims against her; but on my giving security against his claims this was refused, and he was told to bring up his claims in the usual way. This, however, did not suit the object he and his friends had in view.

After two days' hard work the vessel was got up considerably, and the coamings of the hatches were nearly out of water.

It was now November, and into winter, and on the evening of the second day a strong norther set in, which blew hard all night, and it was very cold.

In the morning by daybreak I was at the vessel, and I saw that the strong north wind blowing down the river had lowered the water in the river very much, and the hatches were above water, and the decks at the fore- and after-parts were dry. I got a plank and went on board, and was followed by some boys from the railway station, who seemed wishful to gratify their curiosity.

I stepped through the water to the main hatchway and took off the tarpaulins; I saw that the tops of the coamings were all above water except a small part, which was just about level with the water.

Meanwhile the boys had got hold of the pump-handles, and one was explaining to the others what they were, and began to pump; they were amused at the black bilge-water which was brought up, and, like boys, they began to amuse themselves by pumping vigorously.

I was thinking of how we might raise that part of the coamings by nailing on strips of wood and canvas, when I fancied I saw the water going down the least thing inside of the hatch-coaming. Wondering if it could be the effect of the boys pumping, I cried to them to pump away vigorously with both pumps, which they did, and it was not long before there was a percep-

tible fall inside of the hatchway. I went to the cabin-door and looked down the companion, and I saw by a scum-mark on the paint that the water was going down rapidly.

I was overjoyed at this, for the doubt had still remained that even if we had got the hatches above water, if the damage had been the starting of a butt in her bottom or other serious damage as surmised by Captain B., the water would have flowed in faster than all our pumps could have pumped it out; and there being no dock or slip, it would have been a difficult matter to repair it.

I ran ashore and got a pail which the negroes had been using to water their oxen, and went to the main-hatch and began to bale with great fury, and was pleased to see the water going down fast.

I was so busy engaged at this work that I did not notice the arrival of Captain S. with the negroes and oxen, to commence operations.

"What the devil is that you are up to?" cried Captain S. "You seem as busy as a hen with one chicken!"

"Getting the water out of her," I cried. "If you don't look sharp we will have her afloat before you begin."

"Go ahead," cried he, laughing. "But what on earth are you doing up to the knees in water this cold morning bailing at the main-hatch when you might bail at the fore-hatch, where you would stand dry?"

"Indeed!" said I, looking at the fore-hatch; "I never thought of that."

He then ordered the negroes to tie up the oxen and bring on board the large pumps, and having placed them, he set the men to pumping, and the water went down fast.

The hold being packed full of cotton there was but little space for water to lodge, and the only solid bodies of water were in the cabin and forecastle; which accounted for the water going down so rapidly.

It was soon observed that the vessel was getting a list towards the bank; this was caused by the vessel rising, while the tackles from the mast-head to the bank held her down on that side. These were slacked and the vessel righted, and the *Rob Roy* was afloat once more. By eleven o'clock nearly all

the water was out; and the getting out of the wet cargo was commenced.

Throughout the morning Captain J. and some of his friends had been watching the progress from the other side of the river, and, seeing the vessel fairly afloat again and their plans thwarted, they walked slowly away seemingly to hold a consultation.

A few hours afterwards, Captain S. felt the want of some can-hooks to tackle the cotton bales. He said he knew that some could be got at a smith's-shop on the other side.

I said I would go over myself and get them, and, jumping into a small skiff which lay alongside, I rowed straight across to the other side. The place where I landed was some distance from the ferry-landing, and on the bank lay a large number of cotton bales, large and uncompressed.

I had just stepped ashore and fastened the skiff when out comes Captain J. from behind the cotton bales. His face was flushed with fury, and his eyes flashed like a demon as he came up and confronted me.

It was a solitary place, and could not be seen from any of the houses in the village; and no one was near.

"Mr. W.," said he, "will you pay me that money?"

"I will pay you all that is due to you, as I have already offered you," said I; "but nothing more."

He advanced a step nearer to me, and said, in a fierce and determined tone—

"Will you pay me what I have demanded of you?"

"I will not," said I.

"Then you die for it," he hissed through his teeth; and drawing a dagger, he rushed at me, making a thrust at my breast.

I was on my guard, however, and springing slightly to one side, I struck up his right hand with my left, and closed with him to get within his point, and get hold of his right hand—in which he held the dagger—with my left.

A desperate struggle now took place. I knew it was a matter of life or death with me. He was vastly superior in size and strength to me, but I had during the last three years been a little used to such things, and had undergone some training in that kind of work, and I held my own.

He had evidently been plied with drink to give him courage for the deed, and whether its effects had made him unsteady or were beginning to die out, I did not know; but after a desperate struggle for a few minutes fortune favoured me, and I succeeded in throwing him on his back. I still held the wrist of the hand which held the dagger, while he struggled most desperately to get up, actually foaming at the mouth. Two or three blows with my right hand gave me the complete mastery of him, and I was wrenching the dagger out of his hand, when I suddenly saw a revolver levelled at my head, and his friend and townsman H. standing over us.

"Mr. W.," said he, "let go that dagger, and give it to Captain J., or I will blow your brains out."

I still held on.

Again he cried, "Do you hear me; I give you two seconds to let go that dagger; if you don't, I will blow your brains out;" and he held the cocked revolver within two feet of my head.

"The devil you will, you cowardly dog!" cried a voice from behind us; and in an instant the cowardly wretch H. was choking in the iron grasp of Captain S.

The struggle had been seen from the schooner, and Captain S. and Mr. P. had jumped into the schooner's boat and rowed across, just arriving in time.

Captain S. having wrested the revolver from H., and after choking him till he gasped, he threw him like a piece of offensive carrion into the mud of the river-bank; while Mr. P. took the dagger out of Captain J.'s hand, and the latter was allowed to get up, gasping for breath.

We left them both there, and walked up to the office of the Provost-Marshal, to whom Captain S. handed the dagger and revolver, and related the affair.

While he was talking Captain J. came into the office in a most wretched condition, covered with blood and dirt.

"Well, here I am," said he, "and what are you going to do with me?"

The Provost-Marshal asked me if I wished to take any action against him.

I said, "Oh, no!"

He then looked at Captain J., and told him that perhaps he had been disgraced and punished sufficient, and he would do nothing to him now; but he would keep his eye on him, and if he attempted any further breach of the peace he would certainly lock him up.

The affair had got wind, and a small crowd had gathered. Captain J., who I believe would rather have gone to jail than bear the disgrace, made his way out uttering threats of vengeance; but it was of no avail. The sympathy of the crowd had turned against him, and he was still more irritated when an old fellow in the crowd taunted him by saying—

"Why, Captain, I heard as how you was something of a fighting-man; but I think you must be rather small potatoes to let a fellow like that handle you so."

Captain J. sneaked out of sight, and Captain S., Mr. P., and myself went together to the smith's-shop to get the can-hooks.

Captain S., whose standing and authority was of considerable importance in the neighbourhood, gave an account of the whole affair to the smith and the bystanders, and of course the thing became the general talk.

For myself I was very thankful that I had come so well and safe out of it, considering the great advantage he had over me in point of strength, besides being armed, and I considered that I had been favoured at the time with some supernatural assistance or strength and courage not my own.

I knew that the statement of the affair given by Captain S. and Mr. P. would quite overrule any version that Captain J. or his friend H. might try to get up, therefore there was nothing to fear from popular opinion; yet I believed that he still thirsted for revenge and would try to wipe out the disgrace in some way, and I resolved to be on my guard.

We got a considerable portion of the wet cargo out that day, and the pumping required was about ten minutes every hour, the water being partly from the leak, and partly the drainage from the wet cotton.

A strict watch was kept during the night to attend to pumping, and also to guard against any attempts being made against the vessel by Captain J. and his friends.

For myself, the fact of the vessel being again afloat and the

events of the day drove away all inclination to sleep, and I walked the deck like a sentinel all night; but still my thoughts were of a different kind from what they were on the night I had spent with Captain Downs after the vessel had sunk. I was prepared to give a warm reception to any intruders should they come, but no attempt was made.

By eleven o'clock on the following day about half of the cargo was out, and the cause of the disaster was discovered. In squeezing the cotton into the hold, they had, by reckless overpressure of the screw-jacks, started the deck beams upwards, and, as long iron bolts from these beams passed down through the thick planking which formed the casing of the centre-board, when the beams were forced up the bolts were started, which opened the seams in the casing, and caused a leak high up in the hold, and above the water line, which did not show until the deck-load was put on, which brought the leak under water, and the vessel began to fill, and, the inside lining of the vessel being very tight, the water did not get to the pumps for some time, which may have accounted for so little water being in the well when the pumps were tried; but had any attention been paid afterwards, and the pumps applied on the first appearance of water, the vessel could easily have been kept afloat.

Captain S., who understood everything about the stowing of cotton, swore vehemently, and said it might not have been done intentionally, but, if not, it was certainly the height of reckless stupidity.

About this time we had a visit from Captain B. and Mr. L. They said they had come to congratulate me on the successful raising of the vessel. They expressed their great astonishment at the extraordinary conduct of Captain J., and seemed wishful to impress upon me that they had no hand in advising him. I was very reserved in my replies, and made but little remark, and was very glad when they took their leave.

Shortly afterwards the owner of Captain B.'s sunken vessel, the *Catherine*, succeeded in getting her raised, and the affair of the *Rob Roy* having given him courage, he held on more determinedly to his vessel; and Mr. L. gave up the case and *left the district*, leaving Captain B. to get out of the country *the best way he could.*

As for the contemptible H., he tried to explain away his cowardly act by asserting that what he did was to try and prevent a deadly conflict between Captain J. and me. How he could make that out I never could learn, and, as he took care never to cross my path again, it was to me immaterial.

As for Captain J., he did not make his appearance in public for several days. I sent word to him, desiring to settle with him, and suggesting a reference of his claims against the vessel to the decision of the British Consul. He declined to have anything to do with the Consul, but offered to refer the matter to the county judge. To this I agreed.

The judge, having heard both sides of the question, awarded him a much smaller sum than what I had previously offered him. This I paid to him, and was very glad to get clear of him.

This ended my transaction with this man, and I would much rather that such a character had never found a place in my narrative.

CHAPTER VII.

The vessel again repaired—Another detention—A large Federal fleet on the coast—Capture of Captain Downs's vessel and others—The Forts bombarded—The *Rob Roy* again employed in the Government service—Arrival of a schooner escaped from her captors—Captain McLusky—Account of his capture and escape.

THE wet cargo was soon got out, and the vessel being lightened, the leak was above water, and she required no more pumping. Everything, however, in the shape of stores, cabin furnishing, clothing, bedding, &c., was virtually destroyed, and everything was coated with slime and mud. She was now thoroughly scrubbed and dried out, and fires lighted in the hold, cabin, and forecastle, to assist in drying under decks.

The leak, which was caused by the opening of one seam in the centre-board casing, it was thought to repair by pounding on the deck-beams with a heavy weight until they were forced down into their place again, and then the seam caulked up.

This, however, it was found difficult to do, as the main beam, which had been forced up fully three inches, could not be got down completely, and there was still about an inch of space left between this beam and the top of the casing, but this was considered to be of no importance, as the casing planks were securely bolted at the ends. The casing was therefore caulked tight, and strapped up and down with battens, and it was supposed that, when the deck-load was put on, it would soon work the beam down to its place.

Turning to the cargo. About one hundred bales had been under water for about ten days, and the question was how far they might be damaged.

On opening one of the bales it was found that, owing to the hard compressment of the bales, the water had penetrated only a few inches, and the hearts of the bales were quite dry; but when the cost of repacking was considered, and the abundance of cotton in the country, the very high rate of freight, and the limited means of shipment, it was considered the best policy to ship only the best cotton; therefore new bales would be sent to replace those damaged.

The vessel having been thoroughly cleaned and dried throughout, new mattrasses and bedding had to be got for the cabin and forecastle, and much new furnishing, which, owing to the state of the country, it was very difficult to obtain, and very costly, and things only of the commonest kind were got.

The vessel was at length fitted up and ready to receive cargo again, but, just as this was accomplished, another obstacle cropped up.

The alarm which had been caused by the supposed descent on the coast by the Federal forces after their repulse at Sabine Pass had somewhat died away, but was now again renewed, and this time with some cause.

A powerful expedition consisting of gunboats and transports with troops was rendezvousing off Galveston, and several steamships of war had appeared on the coast to the westward of that place. They had opened fire on the Forts at the mouth of the Brazos River, evidently with the object of drawing the fire from these Forts and ascertaining their strength.

News also had come that all the vessels which had left the

Brazos River about the time that the *Rob Roy* had sunk, had been captured; amongst them was poor Captain Downs.

It was always an object with the Confederate Government to prevent any cotton falling into the hands of the Yankees. The want of this article was severely felt by the latter, and it was greatly prized and coveted by them.

The Confederates, knowing that their enemies were suffering from want of cotton, were as determined that they should not obtain it, and they sought to increase the cotton famine in the North, and make the war unpopular, and also as a retaliation for the famine which they, the Confederates, were suffering from the blockade, and they used every endeavour to prevent it falling into their hands. And when they had to evacuate any place, or fall back in their territory, especial care was always taken to burn or otherwise destroy every ounce of cotton, no matter to whom it might belong, so that it might not fall into the hands of the enemy. Therefore, when a blockade runner with a cargo of cotton was captured, it was regarded as so much gain to the enemy.

The Federal cruisers were now declared to be as thick as bees on the coast of Texas, and orders were issued that no vessels should be allowed to proceed to sea until further orders; and, as the only two steamers on the Brazos River were broken down and undergoing repairs, some of the schooners there might be wanted for the Government service.

This last piece of information was communicated to me by Messrs M. & Co., with a request that I should go and see them on the matter. I went accordingly, and they explained to me the particulars that a large Federal force was lying off the coast. Of this there was no doubt, and no vessel would be allowed to go to sea at present. The service which the Government required from the vessels was a quantity of sawn timber and other stores to be taken down to the Forts, and some sugar and cotton, which was on some plantations far down the river, to be brought up to Columbia.

They said it would be some weeks before they could have a cargo of cotton ready for the vessel in any case; and it might be as well to let the schooner be employed doing that work in

the meantime, as it would be the means of securing favour with the Government, and the ready obtaining of a pass outward when an opportunity offered.

I said I would be ready to do the work provided the vessel was left under my own control and management, but I had only two men and no provisions.

They said the vessel would be entirely under my own management, and as for men, they would give me as many good handy negroes as I wanted, who would bring their own provisions with them.

I agreed; and they asked how many hands I would want. I said about eight men to load and discharge the cargo, and who could pull an oar, as I intended to tow the vessel by the boat when there was not wind to suit.

They said the cotton and sugar was on plantations of their own, but it had all been already purchased by the Government, but they had no doubt but that at the plantations I could easily obtain a supply of sugar sufficient to last the vessel for a month or two, as well as some other provisions.

The men were sent, and the vessel was taken to where the timber was lying. There was a large quantity of it, but, by careful stowing, we got it all on board. There was also some other stores for the Forts, which we took in, and started down the river, using the sails and towing by the boat, alternately, just as the winds and the bends in the river necessitated.

In about two days we were getting near the Forts, and we heard distant reports of heavy guns at intervals, and when we got beyond the woods into the open, we saw two gunboats a little to the west of the Forts, which every now and then fired a heavy gun towards the shore, a little to the west of the Forts.

As there was nothing in that direction for them to be firing at, I thought they might be keeping out of reach of the Forts, and trying the range of their guns on a parallel line with the Forts.

The negroes with me began to show symptoms of fear, and seemed unwilling to venture down to the Forts. They said they "did not want to have them big lumps of iron totted after them," and they suggested that it would be "more

betterer" to wait until dark, and then go down and land the wood in the night time.

"You darkies are always up to deeds in the dark," said George, one of my men.

Darkies or not, I thought, there was some wisdom in the suggestion, as between us and the Forts the river took a considerable bend to the westward, and before we could reach the Forts we would have to pass within the range of the fire from the cruisers, and very near to the place where the shot was falling.

I then ordered the vessel to be put about, and we retired under cover of the woods, and made fast to the bank.

The distance from the Forts was only about two miles straight across the prairie, and I walked over to the Forts and reported to Colonel Evans our arrival with the timber and stores.

He said he was glad they had come, but he thought the suggestion of the negroes a wise one, as he was expecting every minute that the cruisers would open fire upon the Forts, and the appearance of the vessel there would draw their fire more readily.

He showed me where he wanted the wood landed, and said if I would bring the vessel there after dark he would give men to assist in discharging quickly, so that we might get back under cover of the woods before daylight set in.

Towards evening the vessels ceased firing and came to anchor off the mouth of the river. As soon as it was dark we cast off from the bank and made towards the Forts.

There was no wind, but the schooner's boat, which was a very large one, with four strong rowers, towed the vessel at a considerable speed. The negroes had also that day picked up on the river bank near the wreck of an old barge, a pair of long oars or sweeps, as they were usually called; they were somewhat coarsely made and clumsy, but they passed them abaft the shrouds and pulled away. I was astonished to see the great effect they had on the vessel, and I learnt something from this which was of great service to me afterwards.

In about an hour we got down to the Forts, and the negroes started with a will to land the cargo. They were exceedingly

anxious to get the vessel discharged and get away before daylight broke, and the gunboats opened fire again. Some men were also sent by the Colonel to assist, and all was easily accomplished, and we got back under cover of the woods before daylight.

Having allowed the men plenty of time to rest, we proceeded first to the cotton plantation, where we were to take in the cotton. It was farther up the river than the sugar plantation, but I took it first, as I apprehended that the same cotton was to form a part of our cargo, after being sent to Houston and compressed.

We got it all on board and proceeded to Columbia, where we landed it, and it was sent off by rail to Houston.

I noticed on this little trip that the vessel sailed somewhat heavily, and I suspected that her bottom must be foul.

I had imagined that the fresh water of the river would have killed any barnacles which might have adhered to the vessel's bottom at sea, but on my mentioning this to an old river skipper he assured me it was quite the reverse. That if a vessel coming from sea had a coating of barnacles, they grew fat and increased after she came into the river.

On examining the bottom of the schooner I found it to be very heavily coated, so that to go to sea with her in that state she would be almost certain to be captured.

There was no dock or slip at the place, but there was at spring tides in the river near the mouth, a rise and fall of the tide of nearly four feet, and with a vessel drawing only about three feet of water when light, it was very easy to deal.

I got a receipt and directions from the old skipper, and as the spring tides were coming on I resolved to take advantage of my negro crew and have the vessel cleaned and coated, when I went down the river to the sugar plantation.

One part of the vessel's stores which had not been destroyed when she sunk was a keg containing a quantity of white lead, and I obtained from a butcher a quantity of tallow.

In the river near the sugar plantation was a fine sandbank, suitable for beaching a vessel, and on to this bank the vessel was run at high water, and as there was only one tide in twenty-four hours, there was sufficient time to work upon her.

As the water left her she careened to one side, and the high side was scraped and cleaned as the water left her, so that by the time the tide left her, one side was cleaned down to the keel.

The tallow was put into a large pot and melted, and as it got hot the white lead was stirred into it in a proportion of about 2lbs. of white lead to 3lbs. of tallow, and the mixture heated to about 150° Fahrenheit.

As the vessel was not coppered, but coated with verdigris paint, blazing torches of pine knots was passed over her bottom to kill the roots of the barnacles, or any borers which might have penetrated the wood.

This operation, which was called roasting, was continued until the planking was thoroughly dry and a little warm. The mixture of white lead and tallow was then laid on hot with a brush. At next tide she was careened to the opposite side, and the other side treated in the same way.

The merits of this composition was that it adhered to the vessel's bottom and preserved it while she remained in the smooth waters in port or river, and washed off when she went to sea, leaving the vessel clean.

When the vessel was floated off the difference in her sailing was remarkable, the negroes declaring that she could now be pulled through the water like a skiff.

We got to the plantation and got the sugar on board. I also got from the planter a good supply of sugar for the vessel, also a good supply of poultry, some fine vension hams, and a cask of very good wine, made from wild grapes, which grew in great abundance in the neighbourhood.

I may here say that on the banks of this river there was abundance of deer, wild turkeys, wild ducks, and other game, and although I had met with nothing but troubles and mishaps since I had come into it, it was certainly a fine country.

It was late in the evening when the last of the sugar was got on board, and the negroes said to me if I did not intend to start that night they would like to go to a ball which was going to be on the plantation.

They were allowed to go, but I cautioned them to take care of themselves, and be promptly at their work on the vessel in the morning.

This caution seemed to have been quite unnecessary, for at daylight next morning before the men turned out, and before I came on deck, they were busy at work getting the sweeps slung to the shrouds, the tow line made fast to the boat, and making preparations to start with a zeal which I thought quite extraordinary in negroes.

Of my two men, Fred had been appointed cook and George acted as mate, and at him they inquired when we were going to start. He said he believed it would be as soon as the tide turned, which would be about twelve o'clock. They seemed much disappointed, and one came up to me and said:

"Captain, are you not going to start till noon? Why not start now?"

"Because," said I, "there is no wind, and it won't be flood tide till noon. You don't want to be pulling the vessel against a strong tide, do you."

"Pull her, master! We will make her fly now she is clean. You just let us take the oars in the boat, and the sweeps at the rails, and see if we don't make her go like a steamboat."

"But you have surely got mighty anxious to work all at once. What is the matter?"

"Did you not say, master, that this is the last trip, and we would get home when this trip is done?"

"Oh, yes, I don't know of any more; but why are you so wishful to get home; are you tired of this work?"

"Oh no, master; we like this work, and would like to come back again; but you know to-morrow is Christmas, and the holidays begin to-morrow for a whole week, and there is to be a fine ball on our plantation to-night, and we would like to get home to be there."

"Oh, then," said I, "if that is the case you can try her against the tide; but I think you had better get your breakfast before we cast her off, and by that time the tide will have slacked a little, and you can go ahead."

They were not long until they had their breakfast and were ready to start, and George, who had already got an invitation to their ball, promised to steer the vessel and keep her out of the current as much as possible until the tide turned.

The vessel was cast off and they pulled away with a will,

four in the boat towing, and two upon each sweep on board. The tide was not very strong, and I was astonished at the rate at which they pulled the vessel along.

The distance from the plantation to Columbia was about twenty-one miles, and they reached there about three o'clock in the afternoon, and by six o'clock the whole of the sugar was landed on the bank.

I was so well pleased with the way they had worked, that I gave each of them a small gratuity. They were highly pleased, saying that they would no longer be common plantation niggers. They had served on board of a blockade runner, and would be lions on the plantation. They were beside themselves with joy. They had before them the same night a ball, to them the greatest of earthly delights, to be followed by a week or more of holidays, during which there would be more balls. They seemed to be at about the highest pitch of happiness that it was possible for mankind to attain.

"Happy creatures!" thought I, as they went away singing. "This war may result in bringing you freedom, but I question much if it can bring you more happiness."

It was notable throughout this war as far as I saw, and particularly at this time in Texas, that the sympathies and sentiments of the slaves were precisely the same as the whites. They rejoiced over the news of a Confederate victory, and if news of a reverse came, the expression would be, "Oh, never mind," "Dat is nufling," "Our boys will soon pay dem off for dat yet." It is true at this time the question of the war was not supposed to be the abolition or maintenance of slavery.

Having done all that was wanted by the Government another delay came. This was the holidays, which would continue until the Monday after the New Year, during which time the cotton press would be stopped, and nothing would be done in the way of getting the cotton ready for the vessel, and I waited patiently to see what luck the New Year would bring.

There was, however, at this time a great movement among the military forces. Large bodies of troops were coming by railway to Columbia, crossing the ferry there, and proceeding westward.

It was now reported that the expedition which had been

menacing the coast was going to attempt to land at Matagorda Bay. This seemed quite likely, as it was known that there was with the expedition a number of light-draught vessels; but what they would do when they did land I could not conjecture. It would be an easy and safe place for them to land, but what would be the value of the position. It was not the key to any place, there being only some small villages in the bay, surrounded at the back for hundreds of miles by unsettled lands and rolling prairies. The only object which I could suppose them to have in view would be the interception of the trade across the plains *via* Brownsville and Matamoras.

About this time a small schooner arrived in the Brazos River. She had been captured by a Federal cruiser, but had escaped from her captor. The manner of her capture and escape, though simple enough, may be worth relating.

She was commanded by one Captain David McLusky, or Captain Dave, as he was familiarly called. As I may hereafter have to refer to some of this gentleman's tricks, I may here give a short account of him.

Dave was a Scotchman, a native of Kilmalcolm, in Renfrewshire, Scotland. He seemed, however, like some others of his countrymen on going abroad, to have cast off much of that cannyness or caution so characteristic of the race.

In his younger days he had been a seaman, but some years before the war he had settled in Galveston, and after being a few years employed in inland navigation, he purchased a piece of land on Trinity River, where he settled down as a farmer, but still continued to engage at times in inland navigation.

When the war broke out and the ports were blockaded, every old barge or river flat-boat was picked up, and attempts made to fit them up as sea-going craft. Dave was one of the prime movers in this enterprise. He was not in any way fastidious about the size or appearance of his vessel, and would venture to sea in anything that would float. He was regarded as a sort of dare-devil, was of a genial disposition, fond of a joke, and a general favourite with all classes.

On this occasion he had a tolerably neat schooner, but very small, and was inward bound to the Brazos River from some port in Mexico, and his vessel was captured by a Federal

cruiser a few miles to the westward of the mouth of the river on Christmas Day.

The schooner being small, she was taken in tow by the gunboat, the crew were left on board, and two men from the gunboat put on board the prize to steer, and they proceeded to the mouth of the Brazos River, where they anchored for the night.

The schooner was left to hang on to the stern of the gunboat by the tow-rope and the two men ordered to remain on board as a watch.

Sometime afterwards, Dave heard the two men talking together in a grumbling way, and wondering if they were not going to be relieved. Hearing this, Dave got into conversation with them. They were very much dissatisfied at having to remain on the schooner all night without being relieved. It was too bad, they said; it was Christmas night and there was to be a jollification on board the gunboat, and all the others would be enjoying themselves and they had been left out and sent to keep watch on this little rebel craft.

Dave, who was the pleasantest fellow in the world, sympathized with them, saying it was certainly too bad; then suddenly recollecting, he said, "Oh, so this is Christmas, and by the by I have got some splendid brandy which I hoped to have drunk at a jollification on shore to-night, but this confounded capture has spoiled all that, and now I suppose that it will be taken from me; so I think that we may as well drink it as let them get it. We are a prize and we cannot help ourselves, and we may as well be friendly, and I think Christmas is a time that people should all be friends; so while they are having their jollification on the steamer, we will have our little jollification here: so come away down, boys, and we will drink a Merry Christmas, and peace and goodwill towards men."

It was very dark and the night was somewhat dirty; the schooner was swinging by the tow-line about 50 yards from the stern of the steamer, and the sound of revelry was heard on board of the latter.

In a short time, the two men were seated in the little cabin of the schooner with Dave, and the brandy was brought out.

"Tom," cried Dave to his mate, who was sitting on deck, "is the hands turned in?"

"Yes, I think so," replied the mate.

"Then, will you just keep a look-out for a little while, and cry down if there is any hail from the steamer, and when the bells strike, answer 'All's Well.'"

The brandy was plied freely, cigars and tobacco were brought out; no one could excell Dave at spinning a yarn, and the drink soon made good-will amongst men. Dave saw the effects and took the measure of his men.

At last appearing to recollect himself, he said, "Oh this is Christmas night, I ought to give my poor men a little; they have had nothing since we left port," and saying this, he drew a fresh bottle of brandy and pouring part of it into another bottle, he went off with it to where the men were. This was also that he might have an opportunity of telling them what he was intending to do if all went favourable, directing them at the same time to keep watch and repeat the cry of "All's Well" when made on board the steamer.

In the meantime the drink had been plied freely and by midnight both men were helplessly drunk and lying asleep on the cabin floor.

Dave still waited until the middle of the mid-watch. The sound of revelry on board of the steamer had died away and all was still. The night was dark, and there was now and then squalls with rain from the south-east. Nothing could be more favourable for Dave. A rain squall was just forming a darkness to windward of the steamer, and under his lee about four miles distant was his port, the mouth of the Brazos River.

The two men sleeping on the cabin floor had cutlasses in their belts. Dave slipped down quietly and drew them from their sheaths and hid them away, and as the squall of rain darkened round the steamer, he cast off the line and the schooner drifted away; and in a few minutes he had sail set and was scudding towards the river mouth. Her escape had not been observed, no gun was fired, the darkness of the rain squall had shrouded the schooner. The watch had probably been a little slack that night, and the schooner was far away from the gunboat before her absence was discovered.

Dave knew the bar as well as the pilot and had no difficulty in crossing. He was hailed by the sentinel of the Forts, and answered, giving his own name which they all knew, and the wind being fair he proceeded straight up the river until within the woods, where he came to the bank and made fast to the trees.

But the rest of the story is the part which Dave delighted to tell.

The two men having been so very drunk had never woke up and were still asleep on the cabin floor.

Dave thought to have a joke over it, and determined not to disturb them until daylight, and kindling a fire on the bank—as was the usual custom, they made some coffee, and some men coming up from the Forts to learn the news, Dave confided to them the night's adventure, and told them that the two men from the gunboat were still asleep on the cabin floor, and he wanted to have some fun over it before he reported at the Forts.

As soon as daylight began to appear, he slipped softly down to the cabin and threw himself on the sofa which was used as a bed, all the others keeping perfectly quiet.

At length one of the men waking up from his drunken sleep began to look around with a sort of stupified gaze. A little light was coming down through the skylight, but the high trees around made it still dark in the small cabin.

Dave now gave a yawn and looked around. "Oh, I am mighty thirsty," said Dave, "is there anything left in that bottle." The bottles had been replaced on the cabin table as they had been on the previous night. The man rose up and approached the bottle.

"Help yourself," said Dave, "and then hand some to me."

The man helped himself to a good pull, and then as his memory was cleared, he cried to his companion to get up quick and be on deck that they might be seen on the alert.

"It is surely not blowing very hard," said Dave; "it must have calmed down."

"It must be dead calm," said the man, as he ascended the little cabin stair.

Suddenly he uttered a loud exclamation and half-tumbled back down the cabin stair.

"What is the matter?" said Dave, with the greatest simplicity.

"What is the matter!" cried the man, "we have got into h—ll or some other seaport."

Dave jumped up, pretended great astonishment and ran on deck.

The men hastening on deck to show themselves on duty, instead of finding themselves at sea swinging from the stern of the cruiser, finding themselves in the midst of thick forests, their astonishment may well be imagined. Having hurriedly awakened from their drunken sleep, they at first imagined it to be some hallucination; but, on coming more to their senses and finding their cutlasses gone, they did not know what to think of it; and seeing men standing by laughing, they thought that some devil's trick had been played. For the last thing they would have thought of was that the schooner could, or would, attempt to escape from under the guns of the cruiser.

Their eyes, however, were soon opened, when a corporal's guard from the Forts, came to take them along as prisoners.

They were, in the meantime, parolled and allowed to wander about until exchanged, but there was some question raised about their being regarded as prisoners of war. They were not captured by any Confederate force or any party in the service of the Confederate States.

The captain of a merchantman under a neutral flag was justified in recovering or recapturing his vessel, but it was questionable how far he might use force to effect this if he did not hold a commission in the service of the Confederate States. I think the men were allowed to go and were not detained as prisoners of war.

I afterwards in Havana met with one of the officers of the cruiser, and in course of conversation referred to the incident. He said that those two men were addicted to drink, and the captain's method of dealing with them was to keep them away from all contact with it, and knowing that there must be some indulgence on Christmas night, he had put them out on the prize so that they might not have an opportunity of tasting it. He, the officer, thought this scheme of the captain injudicious, and like many other schemes in that line had gone aglee.

CHAPTER VIII.

My share in the schooner reduced to one-eighth—Appointed master of her—The Brownsville route intercepted—Captains of blockade-running vessels to be furnished with commissions—A schooner on the bar—My old friend Captain Downs again turns up—Amusing story of his capture—I am entrusted with important despatches.

AS soon as the holidays were over I lost no time in seeing about getting the cargo of cotton ready for the vessel. I was determined to get her loaded, and take my chance of getting a pass to go to sea.

When Messrs. R. and D. G. M. came to make up all the accounts against the vessel, and I counted up what would be required in the way of stores and outfit, I found we were so deeply in debt to them, that I would have to transfer to them three-fourths of the vessel as their share of her. This left only one-fourth to be owned by myself and partner.

They also made an arrangement fixing the freight of cotton to any neutral port at the rate of 14 cents per lb. They also agreed with me to be master of the vessel, paying me an advance of 100 dollars in specie for my services in port, and to allow me 7 dollars per bale for all cotton carried out by the vessel, when landed in a neutral port.

I now found myself owner of only one-eighth of the vessel, which six months before had been, with her full cargo, my own undivided property. However, if I could only succeed in making the trip, I would retrieve a good deal. And I was now master of the vessel myself, and had everything under my own control.

Of the deck-load which had been taken off the vessel when she sunk, sixty bales belonged to the former consignees, and twenty-one bales to the owners of the vessel. Messrs. M. purchased the sixty bales from the former consignees, so we might begin and take them on board, and the balance of the cargo would be sent shortly afterwards. Messrs. M. also stipulated to send a person with the vessel to act as supercargo, and dispose of the cargo when landed in a neutral port, and settle accounts with me.

I employed a stevedore to stow the cotton in the vessel, cautioning him against committing the same error and doing damage as Captain J. and his mate had done.

He was cautious, but erred on the other side. He did not get into the hold as much cotton by ten bales as had been before. However, I had warned him to be cautious.

A very large deck-load—exceeding what was in the hold—was put on. The bales on deck stood on their ends, and were dunnaged high up from the deck to allow the water free run under them. This made the deck-load about six feet high, and on the top of this all work had to be done. The vessel, thus loaded, only drew four and a half feet of water with centre-board up. One would have thought this rather a ticklish trim to go to sea in; but as other vessels had done it, even to excess of this proportion, I thought I might do the same.

Being once more ready for sea, all that was wanted now was a pass to go to sea, and as this had to be presented at the Forts at the river mouth, it was indispensable. To obtain this, however, it was thought there would be no difficulty, as startling news had just come to hand.

The threatened attack by the Federal forces at the Brazos River and Matagorda Bay had turned out to have been only a feint, and while a part of their fleet hovered off these parts, the main expedition had gone westward, and landed a large force at Point Isabel, near the mouth of the Rio Grande, which was marching upon Brownsville. Communication by that route would therefore be cut off, and as the Mississippi River was now in full possession of the Federals, Texas would not only be cut off from communication with the Confederate States east of the Mississippi River, but her most important communication through Mexico with the outer world would also be cut off.

The only seaport of any note in Texas was Galveston, and that was so closely blockaded by the Federal fleet that entrance or egress was deemed impossible, and no vessel had yet attempted it.

The only other ports or entrances, such as the Brazos River, could only be entered by vessels of very light draught,

such as centre-board schooners; and now that the Brownsville route was stopped or threatened, the only communication with the outer world would be by such of those vessels as might successfully run the blockade.

One steamer, and sometimes two, were stationed off the mouth of the Brazos River; but as these vessels had to lay from three to four miles off, on account of the depth of water, it was possible for a light-draught vessel to creep along the shore in a dark night and pass in or out, if they knew the bar, or got the assistance of the pilot.

It was now supposed that the Government would try to favour and encourage blockade running. And I went to Houston to get the vessel cleared and a permission to pass the Forts out to sea. I got the vessel cleared, but there was still some difficulty about getting the pass to go to sea; but I was told it would be all right in a day or two. Two other vessels which lay alongside of mine had got their passports to go to sea without any difficulty.

On the outward passage from Texas at that time it was uncertain what neutral port the vessel might make easiest. It was, therefore, the usual way to clear for the most distant port, and if wind and weather were unfavourable, or danger appeared in the way, to put into a nearer port.

In this case I cleared for Belize, Honduras, intending to go there if the north wind continued; if not, or if chased, to run into Tampico or Vera Cruz.

In the meantime I was informed that it had been suggested by General Magruder, and Chief of the Marine Department, that, having regard to the case of Captain McLusky, and his recovery of his vessel after it had been captured, that captains of blockade runners might be provided with commissions, or certificates, as officers in the Confederate Naval Service, which, in event of their vessels being captured, would serve them as a warrant in any attempt they might make to recapture her should an opportunity present itself, and such certificates should be granted to such men as the General commanding might approve of. I did not well see how any power under this certificate could be acted upon, or carried out under a neutral flag. However, it might be acted upon after the vessel

was captured, and the enemy had placed their flag upon her; but as obtaining it required no oath or other obligation on the part of the applicant, I applied for it, and obtained it.

It was simply a certificate that ——— was an "acting master" in the Confederate States Navy, and was to be recognized, obeyed, and respected as such.

I had picked up another man, being a seaman, named Hagan, who had come in upon a blockade runner, but had got his leg badly hurt, and was left behind when his vessel sailed; also a boy, a Chilian, who had acted as steward or cabin-boy of some vessel; and a Mr. Taylor, a rather gentlemanly person, who had come in as mate upon a vessel, and left her to join the Confederate Naval Service; but having a falling out with Commodore Smith, the Chief of the Naval Department, he had left that Service, and agreed to go with me as mate. I observed he signed his name as Brotherton on the articles, but I had formerly known him by the name of Taylor.

I had now a mate, cook, two men, and a boy, and though much underhanded I determined to put to sea, agreeing to divide the amount of the wages and bonuses which would have been paid to the hands we lacked among the other men if we made the trip safe.

I again proceeded to Houston, and pressed at headquarters for a pass to go to sea. I was told it would be all right, and I might be getting my vessel down to the mouth of the river, and the passport would be sent on to me.

I was not quite satisfied with this reply, which I took for a put-off, as I did not think they would be so very obliging as to put themselves to the trouble of sending the passport to me; but I was informed that the General commanding had some very important dispatches to send out, and it was being considered which way they should be sent. As the Brownsville route, if not entirely stopped, was not considered quite safe, and they might be entrusted to my care, and sent to me with the passport.

Satisfied with this, I soon returned to Columbia, quite impatient to have the vessel taken towards the sea. Somehow or other all the way I could not help thinking of the time two months before, when I had come down full of hopes of getting

to sea, only to find the vessel sunk in the river, and the sight still haunted my imagination, and I did not breathe freely until I got to the vessel and found her all right.

On the following day we got everything ready, and began to work down the river. We had got about half-way down, and had made fast to the bank to await the turn of the tide, when a party of soldiers were seen coming through the woods towards the vessel. As they came up I heard the mate say to himself, "Damn that fellow! He has sent to arrest me."

They came up to the vessel, and the sergeant in command asked if this was the *Rob Roy*. I said it was. He then asked if there was one George Taylor on board, as he had an order to arrest and detain him. I said, not to my knowledge; but they must satisfy themselves. I would produce the crew list and call over the names; the men would answer to their names, and if they did not find their man they might search the vessel.

The sergeant then took the roll, and called out—

"A. Brotherton, mate?"—"Here."

"Frederick Jansen, cook?"—"Here."

"George Thomson, A.B.?"—"Here."

"James Hagan, A.B.?"—"Here."

"Appolonaria Barrois, ordinary?"—"Here."

"Have you found your man?" said I.

"No," he answered; "none seem to be of that name, at least."

"Well," said I, "that is all that is to go out on the vessel, with the exception of two supercargoes, who are not yet come down; but they are both well known," and I gave their names.

He said he was certain it was not any of them that was wanted; but he still looked dissatisfied, and seemed to think it but a small number of men he had seen, and not the whole crew of the schooner.

I said it was not a full crew, but it was all I had, for I was two hands short; but he would see that they tallied with the crew list, and I told him to take his time and search the vessel, and show me the order, and I would give him any information I could.

The sergeant handed me the order, which I read as follows—

"You are ordered to arrest and bring to these headquarters one, George Taylor, supposed to be on board of the schooner *Rob Roy*, as he is suspected of being a dangerous and suspicious character."

"Does this order come from Commodore Smith?" I said.

"Yes," replied the sergeant.

I then said that two of my men had come in with me on the inward trip—them I was certain about, the other three I had engaged here, and these were the names they had given. "But," said I, "if you will go ashore a little while, I will call them down separately to the cabin and question them."

They went ashore, and I called the mate down to the cabin.

"Mr. Brotherton," said I, "there is no doubt but it is you that is wanted. You know that you are known by the name of Taylor, although you have signed Brotherton on the articles. And I think I can understand very well why this order has been given to detain you, although it is, no doubt, a very trifling affair."

"Of course," said he, "it is me they are after; but is not he a vindictive devil—that Commodore Smith?"

"I know he is," said I, "and that you will find out."

"It is just spite," said he; "he wants to annoy me."

"No doubt of that; but you must mind while you are in the Confederate States, you are in the lion's mouth. It is no place to talk of either law or justice; you must submit to the powers that be. He has the power, and he likes to display it. It would do you no good, but rather harm, to think of practising any deception. He knows you are on board here, and he will send a person to identify you, and the vessel will be stopped until he is satisfied. Therefore your best way is to go boldly at once to headquarters, and make a clean breast of it, and tell Commodore Smith that you intend to appeal to General Magruder, and demand an inquiry or court-martial; but that you are willing first to offer any explanation to him. And I have no doubt, if you take the right way, and pay due court to his dignity, all will be right, and you will get back to join the vessel within a week."

"I believe you are right," said he, "and I will go at once," and he packed up and went off with the men.

When we got down past the woods and in sight of the sea, we observed that two gunboats were lying off the mouth of the river at a distance of between three or four miles from the Forts, one of which generally took a cruise along the coast during the day, and returned in the evening to her anchorage.

I had been getting every information I could of the plans and movements of the blockading vessels, and I knew that the burning of coal was an item to be considered by them, as at this time it was not easy to keep all the steamers employed on the blockade supplied with coal.

Up to this time there had been no attempts made by steamers to run into the Texas ports. There was no place except Galveston where they could enter, and that was supposed to be hermetically closed. It was, therefore, only sailing schooners they had to contend with.

The plan of the blockade, then, seemed to have been for the steamers to lie at anchor with banked fires, or make short cruises in the vicinity of the ports, and the cruising over the Gulf to be done by sailing vessels of the swiftest class.

The other two schooners, which had got their clearance papers and passports, remained within the woods at some distance from the mouth of the river, but, as we were awaiting orders, we went down to near the Forts, where we could be communicated with.

Sometimes one of the cruisers would come in close and fire a few shots, not at the Forts, but generally to the west of them, and more in our direction. These shots would go a considerable distance inland, and fall in the wood or prairies. What they were firing at I never could make out, but it made it rather unpleasant for us.

A few days after we got down there appeared one morning at daybreak a large schooner aground on the bar. She was within two hundred yards of the Forts. She showed British colours, and the pilot was making his way off to her.

I expected that very soon the gunboats would come close in and fire upon her, and, if she got wrecked in the channel, it

would be an obstruction, and it would be difficult for us to get out past the wreck.

I immediately got into the boat with the longest and best cordage I had, and taking my three men, which was all I had, leaving the cook on board, we pulled out through the surf to see if we could render any assistance.

When we reached the stranded vessel I was astonished and delighted, when who should I see looking over the bow but my old friend, Captain Downs. He was astonished to see me, but there was no time to lose in talking.

"Here," cried he, "give me the end of that line of yours, and I will make fast a stout hawser to it, and you take it to one of yon piles which the *Rob Roy* drove in—it will be at least one useful purpose they have been put to—and we will try and heave her over."

There was a heavy surf, and it was dangerous work, but we got to the pile after being nearly swamped, and succeeded in making fast the hawser. We then made fast the boat's painter to the pile, and hung on to be ready to cast off the hawser if the schooner got off.

We saw that the gunboats were getting up steam to come closer in and open fire on the schooner, and it was a trying moment, but we heard the old pilot shouting, "All right, boys, the tide is making. Heave away heartily, and the British lion will soon take you over."

All sail was set on the schooner, and I could see that she was working over.

One of the gunboats had got under weigh, and was standing in, but seemingly with great caution, and keeping the lead going, while on the Forts the artillerymen were at their guns preparing for action, and I began to fear that we were going to be in an awkward position between two fires; still, I did not like to abandon the post.

Our minds were soon relieved, however, by a loud cheer from the schooner, and a call to us to cast off the hawser. The schooner was afloat and coming over the bar at a rapid rate. We cast off the hawser, and as she passed they threw us a line and took us in tow, and we were soon past the Forts and proceeding up the river. The gunboat returned to her anchorage, and no powder was wasted that morning.

I drew the boat up alongside, and jumped on board of the schooner. The old pilot was in his glory, and shouting, "You see what the British lion can do!"

The schooner was taken up the river to where the *Roy Roy* lay, where she was made fast until she was reported at the Forts, and carefully examined to see if she made water from the thumping she had got on the bar, I remembering my experience at the same place four months' previous, and was ready to direct Captain Downs to the same bank where I had beached the *Rob Roy;* but, on examination, she was found to be all right, and making no water, Captain Downs remarking that she had only lost a few of the barnacles off her bottom, which he could very well dispense with.

By the time the schooner was reported at the Forts, the flood tide was about spent, and Captain Downs said he would not proceed up the river that day, but give the men a rest, and we would have a yarn about his adventures since he had left the Brazos River two months previous.

He told me the story of his capture, and, as I afterwards heard it related in almost the same words by one of the officers of the vessel that captured him, I am satisfied of its truth, and it may be worth relating just as it happened.

On the day following the night on which he sailed out from the Brazos River, and when about sixty or seventy miles out to sea, he saw in the distance a steam cruiser bearing down upon him. It was useless to think of escaping, so he shaped his course to the eastward, and hastened to array himself and two of his men in old suits of United States navy clothes which he had with him, himself in that of a warrant officer. Having placed one of the men so dressed at the helm, he stood up himself to answer the hail. The steamer was soon up along-side, and Downs saw to what class she belonged.

"Schooner ahoy!" shouted a voice from the cruiser. "What vessel is that? and where are you from?"

"It is the schooner *Iniquity*," answered Downs, "two days out from the Brazos River with a cargo of cotton, and she is now a prize to the United States steamer *Ponobscot*, and we are bound for the fleet at Galveston."

There was a pause for a few moments, and then the question, "Where is the *Ponobscot?*"

"She will be about thirty miles to the westward," replied Downs. "There were two larger schooners left the Brazos River the same night as this one, and she is away to look after them."

This was too tempting a prize. They waited not for any further explanation, but started off in the direction which they supposed the schooners would be likely to take, while Downs chuckled to himself and thought he had succeeded in giving them a bone to pick; but the scheme, well laid as it was, went aglee.

When the officers began to think over the matter and their chances of capturing one or both of the schooners mentioned by Downs, there seemed to be some discrepancies, and the statement of the *Ponobscot* being in that place at that time did not tally well with the accounts they had of the position and movements of the cruisers in the Gulf, and it dawned upon them that blockade runners were up to a good many tricks, and they should have made a closer examination of the schooner.

This was acted upon, and Downs had the mortification of seeing the cruiser putting about and bearing down upon him again.

There was now but little hope; the steamer was soon alongside, and ordered the schooner to heave to, as they wished to examine her papers.

It was now all up with poor Downs, and he only thought of how he could back out of the difficulty.

When they came on board, he said to the officer that what he had before told them was not true; that the truth was he was from Matamoras bound for Havana, but, as his cargo was cotton, he was afraid they might suspect him and put him to some trouble, and therefore told them that story so that they would not detain him or examine him.

Downs knew that this statement would not hold good one moment, but he wanted to come about as easily as possible, and he handed the officer some papers made out in that way.

The officer looked at the papers, and, turning to Downs with an ironical smile, said—

"Well, Captain, you may be bound from Matamoras to Havana, but, if so, I fear you have got most mightily out of your way."

"And I fear you have got most mightily into my way," said Downs, who could never lose the chance of making a joke.

The officer laughed, and said his first statement would now be confirmed, for he would now be a prize in certainty, though not to the *Penobscot*.

The schooner and crew were sent to New Orleans and condemned as a prize, but Downs's comical humour always gained him friendship, and he was not long detained, and he went to Havana, where he got command of the vessel he was now in.

"And now," said he, when he had finished his story, "tell me how you have got on since I saw you last. I see you have got your vessel up all right again."

I said my story was not so pleasant to relate, and I gave him an account of how we got the vessel raised, and all that had happened.

"Well," said he, "did I not tell you that the ways of Providence are wonderful, and how it might all turn out for the best? And it has done so."

I reminded him that we now owned only one-fourth of the vessel, and only twenty-one bales of the cargo.

"Had it not been for that sinking accident," said he, "I am certain that you would not now have owned any part of either vessel or cargo; for, had you gone to sea at that time, you would have been captured as sure as there are breakers on that bar. Every vessel that went out was captured, for the cruisers were then as thick on the coast as weevils in a sea-biscuit. There are none now, and the coast is clear with the exception of those two lying off the bar, and you can easily dodge them in a dark night. And another thing, let me tell you, quietly: it is a mighty good thing for you that you have got rid of that fellow J. and have the command of the vessel yourself. You would never have done any good with him in charge. So I think you will find, as I have said, that it has all happened for the best, and that Providence sometimes

brings you into a better position through an unpleasant passage."

When I then and afterwards reflected seriously over the matter and came to see it in that way, it did seem clear enough that the sinking of the vessel at that time was, on the whole, rather a fortunate thing for me.

On the following day Downs proceeded up the river with his vessel, and my two supercargoes arrived to join the vessel. They brought word from the mate that he could not join the vessel. They said he was staying at one of the hotels. There was no charge against him, but he was detained and ordered to report at the Marine Department every day until further orders.

'This was another disappointment to me, but I had become so disgusted with delays that I determined not to let even this be a hindrance, and I resolved to go to sea with the hands I had, telling the supercargoes that they would be required to give a hand at any heavy pull, such as hoisting the mainsail or raising the anchor. They agreed to do so, but feared they would not be of much use.

All I wanted now was the passport to get out past the Forts, and I was thinking of going off to Houston again to see about it, when an officer came to the vessel desiring to see me on particular business. I sent one of the men to hold his horse, and he came on board and asked for a private interview, and we went down to the cabin.

He said that, there being now no longer safe means of conveyance between Texas and the rest of the world by the Brownsville route, General Magruder, having confidence in my integrity, had decided to intrust to my care some despatches of great importance. They were to go to the Confederate States Consul at Havana.

I said I feared Havana was a port too much to windward for me to attempt to make in my present overloaded and short-handed condition, and I would most probably run into Tampico or Vera Cruz.

"Better and safer still," said he, "and as there is a British mail from either of those places, you can send them on by that, but you may use your own judgment; but take care,

above all things, that they do not fall into the hands of the enemy."

I said he might depend upon me, but he must bear in mind that there were many dangers in the way.

"All that," said he, "has been fully considered, and here are written instructions to you in regard to that."

He then handed to me instructions in writing, which I read over and assured him that I would follow them out. He then handed me a large sealed packet and an order to the commander at the Forts to allow the *Rob Roy* to proceed to sea.

These written instructions I have preserved till this day, not so much as a relic of these times, but as a memento of a time when my integrity was put to the test, as will be shown hereafter; and I have sometimes pleasure in looking at them with perhaps a slight feeling of self-approbation. They are now lying before me, discoloured with age, and I copy from them the exact words:—

HEADQUARTERS, DISTRICT OF TEXAS, &c.,
IN THE FIELD, *January* 13, 1864.

"SIR,—I am instructed by Major-General Magruder to enclose to you a communication of great importance, addressed by him to Charles J. Helm, C.S. Consul at Havana.

"It is highly important that this communication should be placed safely in the hands of Mr. Helm at Havana, but equally disastrous to our cause should it fall into the hands of the enemy, containing, as it does, papers of a very peculiar nature.

"You have been selected as the most suitable person to whom these papers can be entrusted.

"Relying upon your good judgment, zeal, and patriotism, the Major-General commanding desires you to take especial care of them, and deliver them to Mr. Helm if possible

"Should, however, you find that your vessel will fall a prey to the enemies' cruisers, you are directed to destroy them, taking care, above all things, that they do not fall into the enemy's hands.

"The General wishes you a prosperous journey, and hopes

you will meet with success in the matter entrusted to your care.

"I am, sir, very respectfully,
"Your obedient servant,
"EDMOND P. TURNER,
"*A.A. General.*

"P.S.—If you do not go to Havana, you will be kind enough to send the enclosed papers to Mr. Helm by safe and certain hands. Since writing the above, I learn you will only go to Belize, Honduras.

"I am, &c.,
"EDMOND P. TURNER,
"*A.A.G.*

"To Captain W., of the *Rob Roy*,
"Velasco."

Additional to the Letter to the Captain of the "Rob Roy."

"I am informed that there is a semi-monthly mail from that place to Havana.

"It is best that these papers should be transmitted by reliable hands directly to Mr. Helm; but should you be unable to find any person on whom you can rely for the safe delivery, you are requested to mail them in Belize for Havana, addressed to Mr. Charles J. Helm, C.S. Consul at Havana.

"I am, yours very respectfully,
"EDMOND P. TURNER,
"*A.A.G.*

"Captain of the *Rob Roy*,
"Velasco."

I took the packet, and having wrapped it securely in a piece of canvas and attached firmly to it a piece of chain sufficient to sink it to the bottom of the sea, if need be, I placed it safely in a locker in the cabin. All we wanted now was a dark night and a favourable wind, and as the moon was near the change and it was the season for northers, it was supposed we would not have long to wait.

If there are any of my readers whose powers of endurance *have allowed* them to toil through this and the preceding

chapters devoted to my mishaps, disappointments, and detentions in Texas, their patience must be sorely tried, and they can well imagine how it must have been with me, and my impatience to get to sea and have a change of scene.

CHAPTER IX.

Getting to sea at last—Half-manned in a gale—Passing the gunboats in the darkness—Hard work, but happy—George and his sea proverbs and superstitions—Dodging cruisers in calm weather—A hot chase and a narrow escape—No desire for company—Arrival at Tampico.

IT was now getting near the new moon; the nights were dark, but the weather continued calm, there was scarcely a breath of wind, and we were anxiously waiting for a norther. The other two vessels had come down the river and lay near us. The gunboats off the mouth of the river continued firing at intervals, and their shot often went up the country far beyond us, but it seemed to be wide of any mark, and fell with a heavy thud in the prairie. We did not know what they were firing at, and the Forts took no notice, and did not reply.

At last the expected norther came. It came suddenly and with great fury about five in the afternoon. The pilot, however, would not take us out that night; he said this was too violent, and might only be a squall. The following day the wind fell very much and almost died away, but towards evening it freshened up again. The pilot said this was not a steady norther, and could not be depended upon. He said, however, that it would very likely blow hard all night, and give us a good offing before daylight if we could only carry the muslin.

I determined to go; so did the other two schooners. One of these the *Mary Elizabeth*, Captain Shaeffer, was smaller than the *Rob Roy;* the other, the *Hind* I think was her name, was larger. It was proposed that we should start as soon as the gunboats were hidden by the darkness, and have eleven hours of darkness before us; and if we could make ten knots an hour we would be 110 miles from the coast by daylight.

The pilot said we must go out under low canvas, so that against the darkness of the land we would not be so readily seen from the cruisers or any of their boats until we got out past them; after that we must use our own judgment and scud on as fast as we could.

Everything was got ready; double reefs were put in the main and fore sails, and everything secure for a heavy strain, and the binnacle-light muffled. The pilot came on board of the *Rob Roy*, directing the other two vessels to follow close in her wake.

As soon as the cruisers were fairly hid by the darkness, sail was made, and the vessels stood down the river—the *Rob Roy* first, followed by the *Mary Elizabeth*, and the *Hind* third. The wind being off the shore, the water was smooth on the bar. The pilot, with his small boat, did not wish to go far out to sea, knowing the labour of a long pull back against such a strong wind; and as soon as the water deepened he jumped into his boat, saying, "You are all clear now; go ahead, and remember that the British Lion's good wishes are with you!"

The *Mary Elizabeth* was close up with the *Rob Roy*, almost passing her, but the *Hind* was some distance astern. I never saw more of the *Hind*, and I believe she was captured.

As soon as we were well clear of the bar, I stood along the coast to the westward, keeping in about two fathoms of water for about three miles, and then stood out to sea and set about getting the reefs out. The course steered was S.S.E., the object being to go square off from the coast. As we got more off the land the wind increased, and the vessel went through the water at a great rate. The men were quite exhilarated; they declared she was making twelve knots. I considered that impossible for a vessel of her size, but I had no log to try. The men got more excited, and wished to set the main-topmast staysail. As we were now far outside of the cruisers and there was no danger of being seen from them, I told them to send it up. When it was set she bounded on still faster, and there seemed every chance of being well out to sea before daylight.

We now set the watches. I appointed George to act as mate, and he would take Polly, the Chilian boy, with him on the one watch, and I would take Hagan with me on the other

watch, taking turn at the wheel myself. George was a Scotchman, whose age it would be hard to determine; he might be between forty and fifty. He was partly a wreck, as he was like too many others of his profession who considered it their duty when they got paid off after a voyage to spend all their money in drink. He was, however, when at sea, an excellent man, and understood his business well. He was full of old sea proverbs and sailors' superstitions, and actually believed in many of them. On this trip he discovered when the vessel put to sea she had a slight list to port, which he declared indicated a short and lucky passage, and he firmly believed it would be so. He insisted on the usual ceremony of drawing lots for the choice of watches, and when the lot fell to the starboard watch, which was his, he said this was another lucky omen, and he must follow the rules and choose the first watch. I would rather it had been the other way, as I was too anxious to think of going to sleep just then; but he declared that all our misfortunes and troubles in Texas had arisen from some breach of Neptune's rules on the inward trip, and he insisted that I would go and turn in.

I went below, but not to sleep. The howling of the gale, the rushing of the vessel through the water, and the heaving of the vessel as she got further from the land and into rougher water assured me that we were fast increasing our distance from the blockaded ports and from the scenes of all my troubles, and was a pleasant sensation to me. The idea of a small vessel, drawing about four and a half feet of water, carrying a deckload over five feet high, which weighed more than all the cargo in her hold, going to sea in a violent gale short-handed and handled by men possessing few of the qualifications required by marine regulations, and driven along in the most reckless manner, might seem little short of madness. Yet I can safely say that hundreds of vessels, many of them smaller, less seaworthy, and more overloaded than was the *Rob Roy* at this time, left the Texas ports in the midst of heavy gales during this war, and, strange as it may appear, with the exception of one case, which I will hereafter mention, I never knew of one of them being lost at sea.

In this kind of blockade running, that is, by sailing vessels,

by far the most pleasant and exciting time was the night of coming out from the blockaded port.

In running in it was both difficult and dangerous, especially in a sailing vessel. You approached the coast; you did not know where the cruisers might be stationed; you could not choose your weather, and you could not make your landfall exactly at the time you wished. If you lay in the offing till night you were in great danger of being captured; and even if you knew your exact position, you had afterwards to make in the night a distance of fifteen or twenty miles, and shape your course so as to strike exactly some narrow intricate channel, surrounded and guarded by the blockading fleet. You were subject to baffling winds, calms, currents, or tides; the danger increased as the entrance was approached, and the slightest error might prove fatal.

On the outward trip it was much easier. You could before leaving, mark well the position of the blockading fleet, choose your time, wait for a dark night and a favourable wind, set your course to pass the blockading fleet, and when past crowd sail, and you were getting further and further away from danger.

When I went below I found my two supercargoes trying to be happy. They said they were not going to sleep, they were going to help us to get well away from the Yankee cruisers before daylight. They said they were sure from the rate we were going that we must be near a hundred miles from the coast by this time; did I not think so? The vessel was heaving a little, but they were not sea-sick. Oh no, they never felt better in their life, so they said.

I had not been long down when I heard something crack, and I quickly went on deck. It was the strop round the topmast which held the topmast staysail which had parted, and the sail was fluttering in the wind.

I took the wheel, and told George to get it taken in. This was soon done. I said never to mind to set it again, we had plenty of sail upon her. I only said this because I did not wish to bid any of them go up to the topmast-head in such a wind. They entreated me to let it be set again, and Polly said he would soon go up. He took a new strop and went up,

and soon had the strop fastened, the block hooked on and moused, and the sail was set again.

It was now midnight. We tried the pumps, and found the vessel was making some water, but not a great deal. I then took the middle watch. The gale still continued, and the sea was getting much higher as we increased our distance from land.

After the first two hours I went to relieve Hagan at the wheel. He looked a little uncertain at me and hesitated, then said he had heard that I was good at figures, and a good smart navigator, but it was a very ticklish thing to steer a fore and aft vessel with such a heavy mainsail before the wind in such a wind and sea. I said to let me try it; I would take care she would not broach to. He reluctantly gave me the wheel, warning me that she was taking a good deal of weather helm. He kept standing by my side for some time: at last he seemed satisfied, and said, "Who says you are a shore-going man." I then ordered him to try the pumps, which he did, and reported the vessel still making a little water. At the end of the middle watch I told George to pay particular attention to the pumps. I had always a dread that way since the sinking of the vessel. I then turned in, telling George to call me as soon as daylight was setting in.

At daylight I went on deck. The wind had gone down considerably. I said to Polly that as he appeared to be fond of going aloft to go to the mast-head and see if there was anything in sight. He reported a sail on the horizon to the north-east, which looked like a schooner.

Fearing it might be the *Kittytinnie* I ordered the topmast staysail to be hauled down to make us less easy to be observed, and taking my binocular I went to the mast-head, where I soon satisfied myself that it was not the *Kittytinnie*, but a much smaller vessel, apparently the *Mary Elizabeth*, which had sailed with us from Brazos River.

The staysail was set again, the wind was dying away but there was still a heavy sea, and the vessel was slipping along very well.

On looking over the stern I could now and then see small *flakes of the white lead* and tallow which had been put on the

vessel's bottom. It was now washing off, and taking with it any grass or shells which might have adhered to it. I knew this would leave her clean and in good sailing trim.

On getting the latitude at noon, and working up the time, I found that we had made a run of about 130 miles, but we were not in a very good position.

I knew that the Federals having landed forces at Point Isabel, their war vessels would be often passing back and forward between that place and New Orleans, and they would be on the look-out for blockade runners, and we were just about their track, and the wind seemed to be dying away. The norther, as the pilot had surmised, was not a lasting or steady one, and had spent itself.

About one p.m. it was dead calm, and we lay helpless. We lowered every sail and lay under bare poles, so that we would not be so easily seen from a distance. This I afterwards found to be an excellent plan, as we would be less apt to be observed at a distance of seven miles than at a distance of twelve miles with sails up, and it was not long before this was made plain.

About two p.m. a steamer was observed from the mast-head to the westward, steering to the eastward. She was evidently a cruiser or transport, in fact there were none others in those waters at that time, and whether cruiser or transport she would make a prize of us if she observed us. She was yet about twelve miles distant, but if she continued on her course she would pass within four or five miles of us.

There was not a breath of wind, and the sea had calmed down. If we were only two miles further to the south we believed she would pass without noticing us; could we do anything?

The two old sweeps which we had picked up on the Brazos River had been placed one on each side to reach from the main to the fore rigging, and lashed to the shrouds to form safety rails for the men walking on the deck load. No time was to be lost. They were cut clear and swung at the fore shrouds, and all hands, including the cook, bent on to them; while the two supercargoes, having got a little over their sea-sickness, were told that exercise would do them good, and they

got each one of the oars of the boat and pulled abaft the deck load from the quarter rail. All helped, and all worked with a will, each in turn getting a little change to breathe by taking the wheel.

The effect was greater than I expected, and the speed we made was astonishing; and I believe we pulled the schooner between two and three miles before the steamer was abreast of us, and she passed at a distance of fully seven miles without observing us.

Seeing we were in a dangerous place—right in the track of the cruisers—we longed for a breeze.

George kept whistling and calling upon the other men to whistle. He said it was certain to bring a breeze. I laughed and said, "Yes, if you whistle long enough you will get wind no doubt." But he maintained that whistling would bring wind, for he had seen it happen many a time, and he continued to whistle with all his might.

Towards evening the sky had a sort of marbled appearance, and a few light streaks of reddish clouds were to be seen.

"See," cried George, "did I not tell you that whistling would bring wind?"

"Where is the wind?" said I.

"See yon sky," said he.

"A mackerel sky, and long mare's tails,
Makes lofty ships carry low sails."

About sunset a light breeze sprang up from the south-east, and we made sail and stood to the south-west, shaping the course for Tampico.

The breeze continued all night, but very light, and just before daylight it died away again, and every sail was lowered.

The vessel being fitted up throughout with patent blocks and powerful peak purchases, the hoisting and handling of the sails was comparatively easy.

All that day the wind was light and baffling, and we made but little progress. We kept a constant look-out from the mast-head, but nothing appeared in sight.

During the night it fell dead calm, and before daylight broke all sail was taken down, and we lay under bare poles. This was fortunate, for when daylight broke a square rigged vessel was observed lying becalmed to the northward. She bore about north by west, and seemed to be about eight or nine miles distant.

I thought it might be some vessel homeward bound from Matamoras, as we were now near to their track, but George was sure she was a man-of-war, and one of the sailing vessels which cruised in the Gulf further out from the land.

In any case it was best to give her a wide berth, and the sweeps were got out and all hands laboured at them.

The morning was hot, and it was laborious work, and there were many applications to the water cask. We were, however, increasing our distance from her considerably.

About eight a.m. a light breeze sprang up from the south-east. This was unfortunate as it was against us pulling, and if we made sail we would be observed.

As the men were getting fatigued, to encourage them I told them that if we could just hold our own against the wind for a short time without making sail, the breeze would soon reach the square-rigged vessel, and then if she had not seen us, and did not stand close hauled on the port tack to the southward, any other course she might take would soon take her out of sight. George, however, had served on board of a man-of-war, and he was of opinion that if she was a man-of-war that would be the very course she would stand upon, and she would be down close upon us before we had time to make sail, whereas if we made sail now we would have a good start to windward before the breeze would reach her.

"But then," said I, "what chance have we against a fast vessel of that size with ten hours of daylight before us?"

"You don't know what chance we would have," said he, "with a light breeze and smooth water, and a good start to windward. She is no doubt a fast vessel or she would not be there, and by her size she must, no doubt, oversail us. But her bottom must be foul, and we are clean, and we can lay *a point closer to* the wind than she can, and if we look sharp *we can get a good* start before the wind reaches her."

"Then lose not a moment," said I. "All hands, cook, and supercargoes to make sail quick."

We soon had all sail set, and the breeze freshing up a little we were speeding along nicely before the breeze had reached the square-rigged vessel. It, however, soon reached her, and the alacrity with which she was speeding after us showed only too plainly what she was.

We stood first on the port tack to the southward; she followed us on the same tack. Seeing this I changed tack and stood on the starboard tack to the northward. She still kept on her port tack, and passed dead to leeward of us at a distance of about six miles.

I saw she was barque-rigged, and from the accounts I had of sailing cruisers in the Gulf, I knew that there was one, a large barque, which had been a merchant vessel, named *John Anderson*, which had been selected by the United States Government on account of her fast-sailing qualities, and fitted up as a ship of war, and sent to this station to look out for the blockade-running schooners in the Gulf, and from her appearance I had no doubt but this was the vessel.

The vessels were now partly stern to stern, and the distance between them widening. I hoped it might remain so, but it was not long before she changed tack again, and stood after us on the starboard tack.

Seeing this I again changed tack and stood to the southward.

"That is the way you will do her," cried George. "Keep going about, and if she follows us she must do the same. We can go about without losing an inch of ground, whilst she cannot go round without making stern board, and before she gathers headway again we will gain a good piece on her."

I saw the force of this, and began to work in the wind's eye by short tacks. She continued to follow us for a short time, but seeing we gained by it, she perceived our drift and made longer tacks, though by doing this she ran the chance of losing if the wind veered against her.

We strained every nerve and watched every chance to gain any advantage; everything was made taut, and water dashed upon the sails. One of the supercargoes suggested the throw-

ing over of part of the deck load, but this was ridiculed, as it would have done more harm than good. This might appear strange to some, but to any one acquainted with the working of flat shallow vessels at sea, it is well known that a deck load, particularly of light material, such as cotton, is of great advantage. It causes them to roll easier, and saves jerking and chaffing aloft, and in light winds they sail steadily, and are less apt to shake the wind out of their sails, and when cotton-loaded the increased draught gave them a better hold on the water, and they made better weather.

The barque was evidently gaining upon us, but still I thought that if we could only keep out of the range of her guns until night, we might escape her in the darkness.

About one p.m. she passed us dead to leeward, about four miles distant, standing on a tack to the northward, as we stood on the opposite tack to the southward. The wind was now going down a little, and very soon after she put about and followed us on our tack to the southward.

It was evident that they expected the wind would soon die away, and they wished to keep near to us, so that they might have recourse to their boats if it fell calm.

To baffle them in this we again changed tack and stood to the northward, to widen the distance between us, or compel her to tack again, by which they would lose considerable ground.

Our conjecture seemed to have been correct, for they again changed tack and followed us.

George, who had been watching the barque closely when she was going about, now cried out, "Did not I tell you that her bottom would be foul?"

"How do you know?" said I.

"Because she is lazy in stays, and we will soon beat her at this game if the wind holds;" and he began to whistle with great earnestness.

As soon as we saw her fairly round we again changed tack and stood to the southward.

It was plain that she was losing ground by going about so *often, while we did* not lose an inch, and the advantage we *gained was* perceptible, and the wind still holding she did not

put about again, but continued on her tack to the northward to make a longer board.

Fortunately for us she did this, as soon after it fell dead calm, and both vessels lay helpless. It was only fortunate at having placed us farther apart, but still the wind dying away was most unfortunate for us. She lay about seven miles due north from us, and we knew she would send her boats.

We got out the sweeps and pulled with great vigour, to make the distance greater for the boats to come, in hopes that the breeze might spring up again before they reached us. There was, however, a slight sea against us, and we did not make great headway.

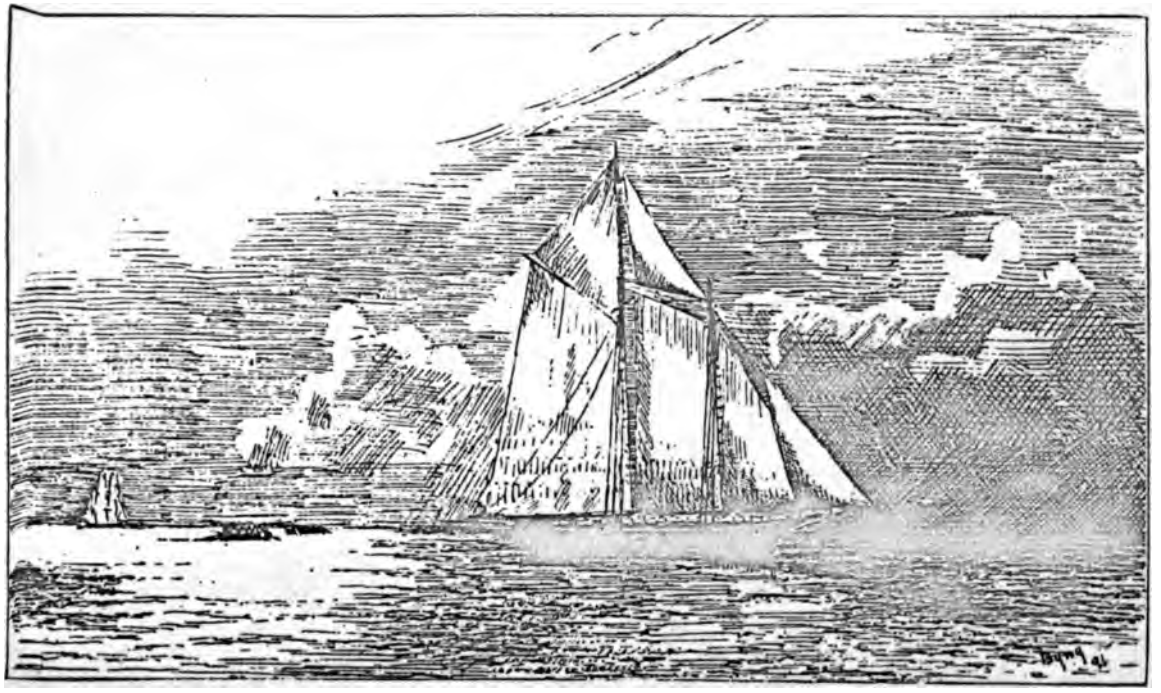
I proposed to lower the sails, so that the boats might lose sight of us. This George protested against, saying there was no fear of the boats going off the track. Boats never left a man-of-war for a distance like that without a boat compass, and they would take our bearing before they left the ship. Besides, he was certain that this lull of the wind was too sudden to last long, and he began to whistle vehemently.

In about half an hour I could plainly make out with the glass two boats pulling towards us, but I said nothing about this to the men, who still plied the sweeps vigorously, and the sea was going down a little, and they were making a little headway.

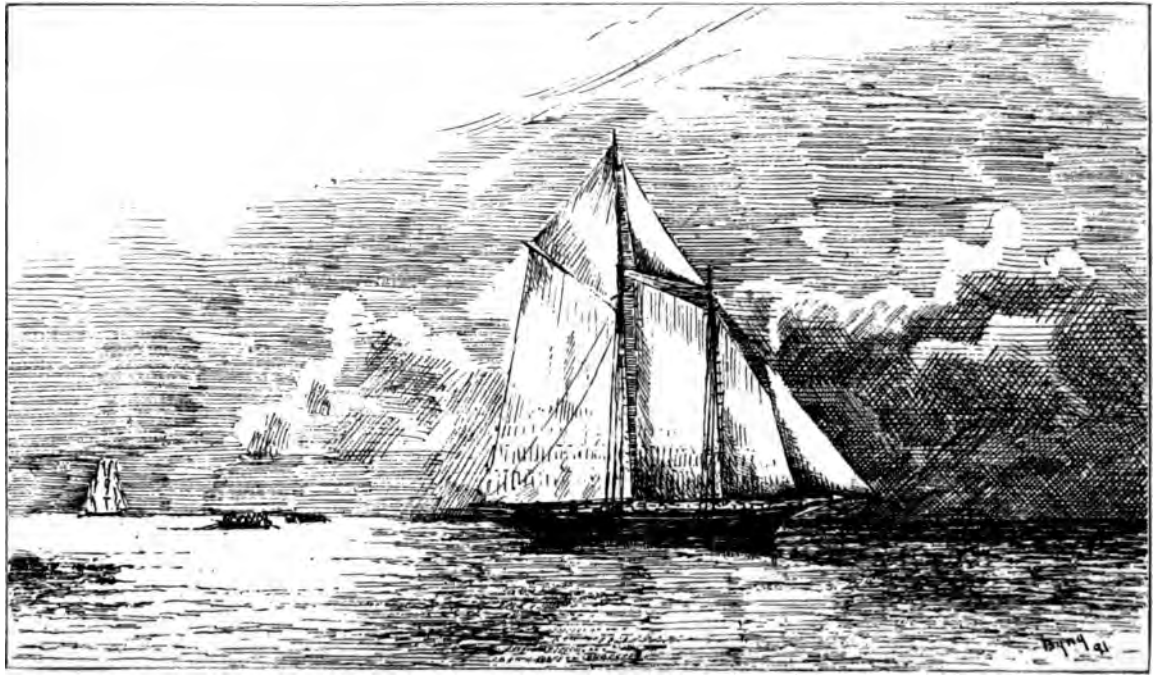
The boats, however, were soon close up with us, the first being within a mile. The men had seen the boats, and they said it was all up with us, and it was no use straining more at the oars. I had General Magruder's despatches all ready to consign to the deep. The first boat was within half a mile, when a slight curl was seen coming over the water. Every heart leaped. It was from S.S.E. The vessel was kept away to let the light wind act on her sails, and the men redoubled their vigour at the sweeps.

I could now see one of the boats within a quarter of a mile, and the men pulling with all their might to reach the schooner before the breeze caught her.

It was an exciting moment. The boats were getting very near, but the breeze was beginning to act on the schooner. The sweeps *were plied* with desperation, George whistling as



VERY NEARLY CAPTURED IN A CALM.



VERY NEARLY CAPTURED IN A CALM.

if he would burst his cheeks. The breeze gradually increased, and seemed to be setting on steady, and the schooner was again speeding along at a good pace.

The boats were almost within hail, and the men in them were pulling as if for dear life, but the schooner was now fast dropping them, and the breeze had every appearance of continuing.

The sweeps were taken in and lashed in their place. Every one was jubilant, the two supercargoes got on to the cabin roof and began to taunt the men in the boats by waving their handkerchiefs and beckoning to them to come along.

I was telling them not to be too happy, we were still very far from being out of danger, and they did not know whose hands they might yet fall into, when they jumped down very quickly, not from what I had said, but at the report of a rifle from the head-most boat, as a demand for us to heave to. Of course we paid no attention, and it was soon followed by a general fire from both boats. We heard the bullets whistle, but none came alarmingly near.

As in duty bound, I told the men to keep down, and I would take the wheel myself, but George, who was at the wheel, refused to leave it, but said to bring a bale of cotton and stick up behind him. Before, however, we could get a bale moved the schooner was far out of reach of shot from the boats, and the firing ceased. This, however, suggested to me the necessity for some protection for the man at the helm in the event of being chased by boats.

Fortune had certainly favoured us.

The barque happening to be about seven miles to the northward when the lull in the wind took place, and the fresh breeze coming out from S.S.E., threw her more dead to leeward, and then we knew she would lose a little time in picking up her boats.

The wind continued to freshen up, and we began to fear we were going to have too much of it for our advantage, and George stopped whistling.

A heavy sea was getting up, which, on a wind, was greatly *to our disadvantage* and in favour of our pursuer, and had the *chase continued* for a few hours longer she would certainly

have overhauled us. Night, however, was coming on, and if we could keep out of range of her shot till darkness set in, we should be pretty sure to escape her.

The wind still increasing, we had to take in our upper small sails. The vessel, which had been making considerable water since we left port, leaked much worse on a wind in a heavy sea, and to keep her perfectly clear, she was pumped every half hour.

We considered her leaking at the staunchions where the joints had been started by the forcing up, and afterwards beating down of the deck when the sinking disaster occurred, and with our deckload on we could not get at them to caulk them.

Since the wind had increased and the heavy sea had got up, the barque had gained considerable upon us, and just as it was getting dark she passed dead to leeward of us, closer than she had done yet, and we saw a flash and heard the report of a heavy gun. This was followed by two others, which was a demand for us to heave to; but as the shot fell short of us, and we knew she could come no closer on this tack, we paid no heed, and she kept on her tack to the northward.

We were now pretty safe for this day, and I began to consider what course it would be best for us to take when hid by darkness.

When I considered what the barque would be likely to do, I thought that would depend upon what she guessed we would be likely to do.

The boats had no doubt reported that the schooner was loaded with cotton, and that she was a valuable prize, and they would have her if possible.

After a good deal of pondering I could come to no conclusion of what they might be likely to suppose or do, and I determined to put the schooner on her best leg and make as big a run as possible before daylight. The wind blew fresh from S.S.E., and it looked black and squally towards the south. The barque was to the north-east of us, four or five miles distant.

As soon as darkness fairly closed around, and the vessels were totally obscured from each other, we eased off sheets and

headed away W. by S., giving her a free sheet, and she rushed through the water at a good speed. George, still at the helm, looked in the direction of the barque and began singing, "Good-bye to you, John Anderson my Joe."

The men now sat down to their supper, well worn out, after a most fatiguing and exciting day, but they were exceedingly jubilant, and rejoiced to think that we had beaten the Yankee cruiser.

I had a very little rum on board, which I got from Captain Downs, and I gave them all a drachm and thanked them, telling them that if we got safe to the end of the trip this day's work would do for them to crow about for years to come.

George was quite sure we should escape and make a successful trip into port, because the vessel when she put to sea had a list to port. He asked me if I did not believe now that he could bring wind by whistling; I did not dispute the matter with him.

The wind continued the whole night, and we made a good run, and at daylight nothing was to be seen from the masthead in any direction.

This was now the fourth day out, and, as I had taken no observation on the previous day, I was wishful of ascertaining our position, and got a good morning sight. The longitude of Brazos River being well determined, I had, while lying there, carefully tested the chronometer, and could depend upon it. When I got the latitude at noon, I found that we were just about 220 miles south by east of the mouth of Brazos River, the beating to windward of the previous day having taken us a good deal out of our course.

The wind now fell considerably, and blew about due south. This was unfavourable, as we could not lay our course to Tampico, so I determined to lay her as close to the wind as she would lay with a good full, and make what southing we could until we neared the coast of Mexico, and then work south to Tampico. By taking this route we were more likely to be out of the way of cruisers.

We kept on this course for two or three days with light southerly winds, until we were within about thirty miles of the Mexican coast.

There is no difficulty in those seas for an ordinary navigator to be always sure of his position. The currents are no doubt strong and deceiving, but the sun is seldom obscured by day, and the planets generally bright and clear by night, and, the pole star being near the horizon, a pretty correct latitude can be got by it at any time of night.

We now began to beat southward, but, the wind being light and the current of the Gulf Stream against us, we made rather slow progress.

For several days we had seen nothing, and the excitement was dying away, and we began to be more concerned about our provisions and water giving out, as we had but a small stock at first, and we went on short allowance.

We kept standing off and on, tacking against a light southerly wind, until we were within forty miles of Tampico, but we had never yet sighted the land, when suddenly, one afternoon, we were startled by the cry of a steamer on the starboard bow close aboard.

Sure enough we had not been on the look out, and there was a steamer coming up at a rapid rate, and within three miles of us; every one was startled, but we could do nothing.

Suddenly Polly cried out, "Oh, no fear of that steamer. I know her very well; she won't trouble us. She is an English steamer of the Pacific Company."

He was right. The steamer ran right across our bows, but took no notice of us.

I merely mention this incident to show the constant terror and alarm at the sight of every object. This, however, reminded us that for some cause the look-out had been for a short time that day neglected, and the necessity of that being strictly maintained.

On the following morning we sighted a schooner, which bore down upon us. We did not want her company. We wished to shun all acquaintance. She might be a captured blockade runner with a prize crew on board, who might, with friendly pretensions, creep up alongside, and then, with muskets and cutlasses, jump on board and make a prize of us. As instances of that kind had occurred, I was upon my guard. We were still tacking against a light southerly wind. I stood

a little to the westward to keep out of her way, but, not wishing to lose any ground, we kept our luff. She bore down, showing the British flag, as if desirous to speak.

Being to the south and to windward of us, she came down with the wind free, and crossed our bow, close on; this threw her to the leeward of us, and I immediately tacked. She did the same, and, coming round on our quarter, the master hailed.

"Schooner ahoy! What is your longitude?"

"About 97," I answered.

He stood a little, and then cried, "I would like to speak with you about that."

"Tell me," said I, "who you are, and where you are from?"

"The schooner *Sylvia*," he replied, "from St. John, and bound to Tampico with a cargo of lumber; "but," continued he, "I have got wrong somehow in my calculation."

I now saw lumber on his deck, and knew he was all right. The wind being light, the vessels came close together.

"You say your longitude is 97?" said he.

"About that," said I. "It was 96 40 yesterday, but I have not worked up to-day's sight."

"Then we must be near the Mexican coast," said he.

"I expect to sight Mount Tamana this afternoon," said I.

"According to my calculation," said he, "I would be in Mexico some hundreds of miles up the country—I make it over 100."

"Your chronometer must be wrong," said I.

"The optician said she was all right, and I have been keeping her rates."

"Give me your Greenwich time, and I will compare it with mine."

He called out his Greenwich time, and I compared it with mine, and there was not ten seconds of difference.

"Your chronometer is quite right," said I. "The error must be in your work."

"There is no mistake in the work," said he. "I have gone over it a dozen times; but there must be some confounded thing wrong, and I would like to find it out, as I am in a *mighty bad fix.*"

"Can't you come on board," said I, "and bring your work with you, and we will compare it with mine?"

"I will do that," said he, and he lowered his boat and came alongside.

We compared the working up of the time, until it came to the applying of the equation of time, which he had been subtracting instead of adding to the apparent time. In this he would not at first admit that he was wrong and the way of applying it at the time was a little confounding, but he at length was convinced and satisfied.

He then looked around and said, "You have got a mighty valuable cargo, if you get it safe into port."

I said it had cost me great trouble and expense to get it this length, and we had come from a starvation-stricken country, and I was exceedingly wishful to get into Tampico, not only for safety, but because we were just about out of provisions.

"Oh," said he, "I guess I can spare you a little," and, going back on board, he returned with a quantity of biscuit, half a box of salt cod-fish, and some potatoes, all of which was most welcome and a great treat to us.

Fred, the cook, said to me, "You see, it does not always do to be too shy of making acquaintance. You were trying to cut away from that one, and now we are glad we met him."

I thought there might be a moral in this, if we could always tell when it is best to make or shun acquaintance.

Soon after this we sighted Mount Tamana, which is a high mountain about twenty-five miles north of Tampico. Although far inland, it is from its height the first of the land that is seen.

The wind having become very light, we made but little progress that night, and in the morning we drew close into the land, intending to creep along the shore and avoid any cruisers which might be at sea off Tampico with the object of catching any blockade runner making for that port.

The wind continuing light and from the south, and a current setting to the northward, we made little progress all that day, and on the following morning it fell dead calm, and we dropped anchor to prevent us drifting back northward with the current.

In the afternoon a sharp breeze sprung up from the eastward, and we got under weigh, and stood southward along the coast at good speed.

The town of Tampico is situated on a river of that name, about six miles up from its mouth.

The only approach to the town from the sea is by the river, across the mouth of which there is, like the other rivers on this coast, a dangerous bar or shoal, through which there is a narrow intricate channel, which is constantly changing, and will never at any time admit of vessels of more than seven feet draught. Larger vessels must lay at anchor in the open roads and discharge and load by means of lighters.

There was no definite landmark by which the mouth of the river could be made out from sea, but we suspected that there would be some large vessels lying outside of the bar.

This proved to be the case, and we soon came in sight of several vessels riding at anchor, and we made direct for them, and soon came to anchor under the lee of a large French transport.

The French were at that time at war with Mexico, and they had landed troops at Tampico. This, however, did not affect us, as trade was not interfered with.

A pilot's boat was cruising among the ships, seeming to take things easily. I asked them to take us in over the bar the same night, but, with their usual procrastination, they answered, "Bueno, Mañana" ("All right, to-morrow"), the general reply from a Mexican when he agrees to do anything. We were quite safe from capture, but if a norther came on, Tampico roads is a very dangerous place.

Shortly after we anchored, our friend the *Sylvia* from St. John, which we had spoken two days previous, also came to anchor.

We lay here all night, but the weather remained calm, and on the following day a light breeze sprung up from the eastward.

The pilot came on board and took us across the bar, and with the breeze we sailed slowly up the river and anchored opposite the town.

We were safe in port at last, and the voyage was over, and

a strange and eventful one it had been, lasting nearly five months, and attended by much worry, delay, and misfortune, but counterbalanced in the end by some strokes of good fortune which seemed morally to compensate for all, and I felt truly grateful.

CHAPTER X.

Landing of the cargo at Tampico—A mysterious stranger makes friends with me—A chance to make a fortune by betraying trust—Tampico under French rule—Rejoicings at Maximilian's acceptance of the Imperial Crown of Mexico—Departure from Tampico—Arrival at Havana—Settling up accounts.

TAMPICO was at this time in possession of the French forces. It was not a very great place of business, and the arrival of a blockade runner always caused some stir. There were many applications for the consigneeship, the cargo being valuable plenty of money would be advanced upon it. The seamen would be paid off, and receive large bonuses, and they would be flush of money; and even in this rather out-of-the-way Mexican port it was astonishing to see what a number of kind-hearted English-speaking gentlemen gathered round the small vessel.

These gentlemen were, or pretended to be, actuated by their great sympathy with the Confederate cause, and their great admiration of the adventurous spirit of men who dared to run the blockade, and came to congratulate them on their deserved success. They were now volunteering their kind offices to them in any way, and wishful to show them where they would get all their wants supplied with everything of the best quality at the cheapest rates.

The supercargo, who represented Messrs. M. and Co., had directions to whom he should consign their part of the cargo, and as I knew no person in the place, I consigned the vessel to the same party, and got the vessel entered at the custom house.

The cargo was valued at something like 30,000 dollars, and

if I remember aright the import and export duties had been somewhat reduced since the place had been occupied by the French. The freight due the vessel amounted to about 13,500 dollars.

There being no wharf where the vessel could land her cargo, she lay at anchor in the river, and the cargo was taken ashore in lighters.

As everything is done slow in Mexico, and only certain hours in the day that we were allowed to discharge, and a great many official forms to be observed, it took several days to discharge.

The vessel was at length discharged and inspected.

It had been observed that as soon as the vessel came into smooth water she had ceased to leak, and the cause of her leaking was now discovered.

The stevedore, having been warned while stowing the cargo not to screw the cotton too tight, had thrown it in loosely, and the hold not being packed tight the deck was not sufficiently supported to bear such a heavy deck load, the consequence was that the deck worked with the straining of the vessel in a sea way, and there being so little free board the water washed over the decks and the vessel leaked at the sheer plank.

As soon as the vessel was discharged the crew were paid off. Getting their extra pay for being short handed, and their bonuses for the outward trip, they had good large sums to receive. I told them that they might ship again as soon as they wished, as I did not intend to remain long at Tampico.

Fred, the cook, who was saving every penny was ready to join at once, and as a cook was wanted he joined the same day. Hagan and Polly joined in a day or two, but as for poor George, it was the largest sum he had ever possessed—about 220 dollars—it was too much for him. I tried to persuade him to put part of it by in some way. But it was no use; he had not had a spree for six months, and he was going to have a glorious one. The last time I saw him he was in a café with some French soldiers, shouting "Vive Napoleon."

A day or two after our arrival I made the acquaintance—I scarcely know how—of a gentleman who seemed to take great interest in blockade runners. There was a place some distance down the river from the town owned by an American, who had

erected a small wharf for lighters. Also a small cotton press and some houses for storing cotton or other goods. Here the cargo was landed and weighed, the bales repaired and put in order for shipment to Liverpool.

It was here I met this gentleman. I thought at first that he was in some way connected with the cotton yard, but I found out that he was a stranger. He was much about when we were landing the cotton, often entered into conversation, and accompanied me on my walk up to the town after the day's work was over.

This man seemed very intelligent and amiable in his manner. He professed great sympathy with the Confederate States, but he feared very much that their end was very near.

On this point I did not express any opinion, and tried to avoid the subject, but he seemed to harp upon it in a somewhat sorrowful and desponding manner.

"Of course," said he, "it is easy for you, a foreigner, and a neutral to look upon the matter with indifference, but with me it is very different. My fortune has been ruined by this war, and I have no other country but the States."

"As for that," said I, "I am in the same position. I was in a good position in the States before the war broke out, and as a foreigner it might be thought I could have remained neutral, but in spite of myself I got entangled in the cursed war, and have lost my all."

"You may well say cursed war," said he; "but surely you can't complain. Are you not owner of that vessel? And look at the value of that cargo you are landing."

"That cargo don't belong to me," said I, "neither does the vessel. I am master of her and own one-eighth of her. Six months ago she belonged entirely to me, with a cargo besides. But that is all the interest I have in her now."

"How does that come about?" said he.

I gave him a rough account of my bad fortune in Mexico, of the sinking of the vessel, and other difficulties in Texas.

He listened with interest; asked if I had seen or known such-and-such parties in that part of Texas, and what had become of them?

I asked if he was acquainted in those parts, and if he had done any business there?

He said he had done some business on the Brownsville route before it was closed by the Yankees, but had lost heavily when it was closed, and some of his goods were now lying rotting at the mouth of the Rio Grande. He sympathized much with me in my losses in Texas.

I said that in these desperate times we must take fortune as it came. I hoped to be able to make it all up yet. The trip I had just completed would enable me to redeem a part of my vessel.

"Well, I hope so," said he. "But let me tell you this. If you intend to do it by blockade running, you will have to go very quick about it, as the time will now be very short, and the danger much greater."

"I don't know about that," said I.

"Oh," said he, "you take my word for it, blockade running is about at an end, and so is the Confederacy. I am sorry to say it, but I know a great deal of what is going on, both inside of the Confederacy and outside of it, and I would advise you to be watchful and do as others are doing, that is, to look out for Number One."

Just at this time we had got to the upper landing place, and I saw that Fred, the cook, which was the whole crew of the schooner, was ashore with the boat waiting for me. Standing by him was an old gentleman, who on my coming up said—

"Captain W., I presume."

"That's me," said I.

"My name is Currie," said he.

"Oh," said I, "Captain Currie. I have heard of you often. Glad to see you. Come away on board and have a chat."

We stepped into the boat and went off to the schooner.

Captain Currie had owned, or partly owned, a small schooner, and had succeeded in making three trips through the blockade, one to the Rio Grande and two to Tampico, by which he had made a little money, and being well advanced in years he had decided not to risk any farther, but to retire quietly on what he *had*, and as he rather liked Tampico he was going to make it *his residence* until the war was over.

He had just come to see me and have a talk. He also wished to recommend to me two excellent men who had sailed with him, one of whom had already been acting as mate, and would do well for me in that capacity.

I said that was just what I wanted, and they might come on board to-morrow; adding in a laughing way that on my run from Texas I had no mate, and only two men and a boy besides the cook, and yet the vessel carried two supercargoes.

"Was that one of your supercargoes that came up the road with you?"

"No," said I, "that is a man I have met once or twice about the cotton yard. I don't know anything about him, and I was just going to ask you if you knew him. He seems to be one of the many we meet up with whose fortunes have suffered by the war; his sympathies are very strong with the South, but he fears the Confederacy will not be able to hold out much longer."

"Their sympathies are always very strong with the South when they meet up with blockade runners," said Captain Currie; "and he may be wanting to borrow some money from you before long. But I don't know him at all; I have never seen him before, and he can't have been very long in Tampico."

Captain Currie soon afterwards went ashore, and on the following morning came with the two men. I engaged them both, one as mate, the other as seaman. They both proved excellent men, and remained with me as long as I had the schooner.

On the following evening, as I was coming up from the cotton yard, my friend of the preceding evening joined me, and we again got into conversation. I was wishful to hear something more of what he had last night spoken of regarding his knowledge of what was going on inside and outside of the Confederacy, and the possible early collapse of the latter.

He said the Federals had advanced much farther than was generally known.

I scarcely understood that.

"I mean," said he, "that they have advanced their influence and established a system whereby they know everything that is going on."

I said the Confederates, so far as I had seen, were united and determined, and would, I thought, resist to the last extremity.

"I am a very strong sympathizer with the South," said he, "and I see you are the same."

"Oh, no," I interrupted, "I never was a very strong sympathizer with the South. I was much opposed to the secession movement, and would have done anything I could to have prevented it. But when the North declared war I was in a position that I could not well withdraw from, and I served my time in the Confederate Army, and that has given me a sort of veneration for the South, though I would now wish as far as possible to remain neutral, but that I cannot well do, having suffered so much by the war. Still, I think that the secession of the States was a great mistake."

"A great many more have thought like you," said he; "and I for one. But what I was going to say was this—that although it might appear to you from what you saw in the Confederacy that all were united and loyal to the cause, that was very much because they dare not show themselves to be anything else. But I can tell you that there are at this moment within the Confederacy thousands and tens of thousands who did not sympathize with secession, and who are now suffering and sick of this war, and who look forward to the subjugation of the South as the first and only chance of a return to peace and prosperity. And they don't care how soon it may take place, although they don't express themselves openly. And further," added he, "there are plenty who pretend great zeal, and are even in the service of the Confederate Government, who, on the quiet, play into the hands of the Yankees, and trade with them."

"Oh, that is quite common," said I. "I knew of lots of that work going on on the Mississippi river twelve months ago, and I must say that in many instances I could scarcely blame them."

"Blame them! No. Who could blame them? I think," said he, "that for those who were opposed to secession, and had the war forced upon them, and their fortunes wrecked, and themselves partly deprived of their liberties, and in a manner forced into the service, they were perfectly justified in availing *themselves* of any chance that might offer or fall in their way

to retrieve their losses, and that is just what a great many are now doing, and right they are."

I thought my friend was working round considerably from the sentiments he at first expressed, and I rather dropped in the conversation, merely remarking that hundreds of thousands would be brought to ruin by this war.

"Yes," said he, "and many of these were opposed to the whole movement, and I suppose you and I are among that number; but you are better situated than me, for you have a chance of retrieving your fortune."

"Not much," said I, "if it be as you prophesy—a sudden collapse of the Confederacy."

He stopped in his pace, turned towards me, looked around carefully, and raising his finger to his lip, said in a cunning but significant tone—

"You have chances that you don't know of."

I was a little astonished at the mysterious way in which he spoke, and I said I did not understand him.

He said he believed I did not; but what if he could put me on the way to make a very large sum of money in a very short time and with very little trouble.

I thought him some enthusiast, or some promoter, or agent for some airy scheme in which he thought to induce a thoughtless blockade runner to invest his suddenly acquired money.

I laughed and said, "What was this? To go into some gold-mining speculation?"

"No," said he, "it is something more practical and sure, and in connection with the subject we have been talking about, and when I have made it known to you, you will see the truth of what I have said in regard to the Federals knowing what is going on in the Confederacy."

I began to wonder what sort of a person he was, and wishing to come to the point, I assumed a sort of incredulous and careless air, and said—

"Well, let us hear what it is."

"Not quite so fast," said he. "You may have some scruples about the matter, but the sum to be obtained is very large, and would make you independent, after all your losses and troubles.

But before I make it known to you I must have a solemn understanding with you."

"Oh, well," said I, "if there is to be solemn understandings in the matter, I don't care about going into any visionary or mysterious transactions, so you need not mind saying more about it."

"There is nothing visionary about it," said he, "but hard cash paid down to you, and what I want is a solemn promise that if you do not accept the proposition, you will never say to any one that such a proposition was made to you."

I began to feel a little uneasy in his company, and wishing to cut the matter short, I replied that never was a very long time, and I did not wish to bind myself to any such promise, and I thought we had better drop the subject.

He still persisted, and I must own that curiosity is a weakness, and I felt a desire to know what he was driving at.

At length, said he, after a pause: "Then will you promise not to mention it to any one before the war is over."

"I might promise that," said I, "unless it be some wicked or treacherous plot which honour would compel me to expose, or right or justice would suffer by my silence."

"It is nothing of that kind," said he, "if you do not accept the proposal, your silence on the subject will do no harm to any one."

"Very well," said I, "let me hear what it is."

"Well now, to come to the point," said he, "you have in your possession a packet containing despatches from General Magruder to the Confederate States Consul at Havana, and I can assure you that a very large sum of money will be paid to you if you hand these despatches to a person that I will introduce to you. I will not name the amount, but I believe you can name your own figure, and you will have it paid down to you."

I looked at him in astonishment for a moment, and then affecting to treat the matter lightly, I said, "And who has been playing this joke upon you? Who has told this story of my being the bearer of despatches."

"*Never mind*," said he, "did not I tell you that the Federal *Government* had long ears, and knew all that was going on in

the Confederacy: you now see the truth of what I told you."

"Indeed I do not," said I. "Do you think that General Magruder would intrust to me, an unknown and irresponsible foreigner, on a small vessel like that, despatches that would be worth ten cents to the Federal Government or to any one else?"

"General Magruder could not help himself," said he; "the Brownville route was blocked, and strict watch was laid for these despatches, and he entrusted them to you because there was no other conveyance."

"And if he had," said I, "it is not so long since I left the Brazos River, and how could you know of it down here?" I said this because I thought he was only trying to find out whether I had the despatches or not.

"Yankee couriers travel quick," said he. "Did I not tell you that they had established a system whereby they knew what was going on within the Confederacy."

"Then," said I, "do you really believe that I have such a thing."

"Yes," said he, "I do."

I gave a sort of incredulous laugh, and said, "Well, allowing it to be possible that General Magruder should do me the honour to trust me with such valuable and important despatches, would not I be a sweet-scented traitor to sell them for a sum of money? Would not that be playing Arnold with a vengeance? Was ever he a happy man?"

"That is for yourself to weigh," said he; "this case is very different from Arnold's case. Had the rebellious colonies at that time been put down by the British, as the Confederate States are certain to be now, Arnold would never have been mentioned as a traitor but held a high position as a loyal man; and you may return to your native country, and live in independence when the name of the Confederate States are forgotten, and no one be the wiser, and you would be doing nothing more than hundreds are doing every day to retrieve their lost fortunes, and these are men natives of and citizens of the Confederate States, whereas you are a foreigner and have no interest in the Confederate States whatever."

I made no reply, but walked on in silence. I could not understand how he could have got the information. I was certain that none of my men knew anything about the despatches ; therefore the information must have come by land, and that very quick, and there must be treachery somewhere, as it was certain that the Federal Government knew that despatches of some importance were being sent, and they were on the look out for them, and I thought to put him off the scent, and after a pause, I repeated in a half-laughing way—

"But what on earth led you to suppose that I had any such despatches?"

"I have already told you that I know," said he, "and the source through which I got my information I can depend upon. And now do you say that you have not got such letter or despatches in your possession?"

"That," said I, "is putting the question very direct, and you must allow that I am not bound to answer it; nevertheless if it will do you any good to know, I may say that I have letters in my possession, plenty of them. Every blockade-running vessel has letters to bring out from people within the Confederacy to their friends outside, but which must be all read and approved by the Provost Marshal in my presence before I can take them. In none of these letters was there anything very interesting, except one from a Yankee sailor who is a prisoner in Galveston to his sweetheart in Boston, in which he says that he will return to her before six months if he should swim all the way. That letter I would not give up as I think the damsel ought to get it." I said this in a laughing way, thinking to joke the matter off and put him off the scent.

We were now approaching the place where my boat was waiting, and I made to go towards it.

"Well," said he, "I don't press the matter upon you, but there is the terms, and you need not be afraid to ask a large sum, you will get it. A few minutes and a few words will transact the business; you hand over the despatches, and the money will be put into your hand; so you can think over it. In the meantime you will keep your promise and say *nothing* about the matter"

I said I always kept my promises, and bade him good-night, and hastened to my boat glad to part company with him.

I must say that I felt somewhat nervous about the despatches, and my mind was not at ease until I got on board the vessel and opened my trunk, and saw that the packet was there all safe.

I did not know very well what to think of this matter. When I looked over the letter of instructions to me, it was no doubt said that the safe transmission of the despatches was of great importance, and equally disastrous to the Confederate cause should they fall into the hands of the enemy. But I could scarcely think that the importance of them could amount to such a large sum as he seemed to hint at.

Still I scarcely considered them safe in the cabin of the schooner, so I had them safely lodged, as some private and valuable papers of my own, in the iron safe of my consignees.

On the following day I was walking along the street with one of my consignee's clerks, when we met my friend; he merely saluted and passed. I asked the young man if he knew that gentleman. He said, no; but he had seen him a day or two before coming out from the office of the American Consul. I saw him again the same evening, but shunned him.

A day or two after this the Confederate agent, whom I had known at Matamoras, arrived over-land from that place. The traffic by that route having been stopped, and entry to Texas barred by the Federal troops occupying Brownsville, he had come by land to Tampico to get the mail steamer to Havana. I knew this gentleman, and he was one I might well trust, and as the mail steamer was to leave for Havana in a day or two, I delivered the package to him glad to have my mind relieved of the responsibility.

There was little more worth noting during our stay here. Although the town was occupied by the French troops, the civil government was not interfered with. Some cumbersome restrictions had been abolished by the French, and some reforms and progressive measures introduced, and, on the whole, business and things in general seemed to be tending towards prosperity. The people appeared to be contented,

and, to outward appearance at least, they seemed to welcome the French.

During the time we lay here, there was one day of great rejoicing. It was a general holiday in honour of the news which had arrived of Maximilian having accepted the Imperial Crown of Mexico. The town was decorated with flags; the cathedral bells were rung; salutes were fired; and tremendous *vivas* went up from large crowds in the streets and plazas.

Talking that day with some prominent merchants of the place, I asked if they thought that the people were sincere in the part they took in the demonstration.

"Sincere enough during the time it lasts," was the reply, and they would just do the same to-morrow for President Juarez, if he could come in and drive out the French and unseat Maximilian.

Tampico not being much of a business town, it was not a likely place to get a cargo, and the prevailing winds in the Gulf of Mexico being from the eastward, the run to Texas would be somewhat to windward, and as there was a large number of Federal war vessels cruising along the coast of Texas betwixt Galveston and the Rio Grande, it would be rather a dangerous passage to beat up the Texas coast.

I also wished to have the vessel docked and overhauled, and that could not be done at Tampico, and also to have a settlement with Messrs. R. and D. G. M., the head partner of that house being then at Havana.

I therefore determined to proceed up to Havana, have the vessel put in thorough order, and if I made arrangements for another trip I would be to windward, and have a better slant across the Gulf to Texas. And at the same time we would cut across the line of cruisers with less chance of capture than by sailing along it.

The vessel could sail without ballast, but she required some weight to give her a hold of the water while beating to windward.

Ballast being very difficult to obtain in Tampico, I reshipped our own twenty-one bales of cotton, and filled some casks with water, and placed them in the hold to serve as ballast, but *still the* vessel drew very little more than three feet of water.

I got my name regularly enrolled as master, by the British Consul, and endorsed on the register, and having got a full crew, and three passengers, I got a clearance in proper form, and sailed for Havana about the beginning of March.

This was, of course, a voyage between two neutral ports, and we were supposed not to be subject to capture. It did not, however, take much to cause a seizure on suspicion, and the Yankees had been playing high jinks on the seas lately, even seizing vessels while on a perfectly legitimate voyage, between two neutral ports, simply because the vessel had on some former occasion run the blockade, or had on board cotton which had been run through the blockade. These vessels would be taken to New Orleans or Key West, and there detained for a month or two awaiting trial in a prize court, after which they might be released, but not until they had been put to very great expense and detention, the Yankees having the satisfaction of knowing that they had kept them out of mischief for a time at least.

Knowing this I took a route on which we were not likely to be overhauled, and beat up the Yucatan banks. This was more against the current of the Gulf Stream than by keeping further north, but I wished to have a pleasant trip without being constantly on the *qui vive*.

The three passengers we had were from the Southern States, and such was the feeling at the time that they preferred to take passage on the *Rob Roy*, because she was a blockade runner, than upon a larger and much more comfortable vessel that was going to Havana at the same time. This was the *Sylvia* from St. John, which we had spoken before arriving at Tampico. The captain having discharged his cargo of lumber, was now going to take the vessel up to Havana, in hopes that he would be able to sell her there at a high price for blockade-running purposes.

On this trip up to Havana, there was nothing of interest to note. We had three days of very heavy weather, and the vessel being light, and drawing only about three feet of water, was knocked about a good deal, but, on the whole, it was astonishing how well she behaved, and made good weather under double reefs and two-thirds centre-board. All the rest

of the time we had very light head-winds and adverse currents, and it took us fifteen days to beat up. But we were never overhauled or questioned, indeed, we scarcely saw a sail on the whole trip, until we made the coast of Cuba, and we reached Havana about the middle of March.

The crowd of sharks—land ones I mean—which generally gathers round a vessel when she enters a port is well known. Of course in the case of a large vessel with a number of passengers it is not so much to be wondered at, but to see a small one which looked like a mite among the others in the harbour, surrounded by a crowd of boats, all scrambling to get to her as she entered the harbour, showed that there must be some unusual attraction.

Although Havana was a Spanish city, this was not a Spanish crowd, but mostly of the Anglo-Saxon race, consisting of runners and speculators from America, Britain, and other places, who had flocked to Havana to reap a harvest off the thoughtless blockade runners, who, when they had made a successful run, would find themselves suddenly possessed of money which they did not, just at the moment, know what to do with, and these gentleman were exceedingly wishful to direct them on that point. So that as soon as a vessel was signalled at the Moro Castle, which had the appearance of a blockade runner, a crowd of boats would be making their way to greet her arrival.

Of course these gentlemen professed to have no other object in view than to be of service to any one who had rendered aid to the Confederate cause with which they professed great sympathy.

The *Rob Roy* was not direct from a blockaded port, but she had run out from Texas, and though having touched at a neutral port, she had still some of the bonused crew and some of that magical commodity cotton on board. She would, of course, want a new outfit, cargo and stores, for another trip, off which there must be commissions. There would also be advances to the crew for the next voyage, which must be all spent before the vessel would sail again; and as these small blockade runners were generally consigned to master, who *would wish to* consign to a merchant of the place, there were

numerous representatives of recently started firms applying for the consigneeship.

I had been advised that in the case of a stranger going to Havana with a vessel, it was best in all cases to consign to a respectable old-standing Spanish house. I had the name of one such, to whom I consigned, and by whom I was well served. The vessel was entered at the custom house and the small lot of cotton landed.

One of the first things I did after getting through the usual entry business, was to go to Mr. Helm and inquire if he had got the despatches. I found that gentleman, who informed me that he had received the despatches all right. On ascertaining that I was the captain of the *Rob Roy*, he asked me to dine with him the same evening, which invitation I accepted.

The dinner was at a restaurant, and there was a small company, consisting of Confederate officers and agents and some captains of blockade runners with whom I made acquaintance.

The two supercargoes had come with the vessel to Havana, and there was now to be a general settlement.

I, of course, was registered owner of the vessel, but Mr. F., the representative of the firm of Messrs. R. and D. G. M., held from me a power of attorney for three-fourths of the vessel. And Mr. P., my partner's representative, had documents of agreement for one half of the remainder, out of which he had to pay me the balance still due to me on his half of the vessel and cargo; he, of course, losing equally with me in the sinking disaster and other mishaps in the Brazos River.

Mr. R. M.—the senior partner of Messrs. R. and D. G. M. —was residing in Havana, and with him must be the first settlement.

I found Mr. R. M. a rather close customer to deal with. I had been paid at Tampico my wages as captain for the run out, at 7 dollars per bale as agreed upon, but now came to be divided the proceeds of the freight on the outward trip, the gross amount of which was 13,500 dollars, but by a statement made up by Mr. R. M. on data furnished by the house in Texas and sent out by the supercargo, after deducting disbursements, commissions, and other charges,

and freight of our 21 bales of cotton, the balance due to us for our fourth interest in the vessel amounted to only 1,400 dollars. I thought he cut pretty sharp, but I accepted as I wished to be clear with him.

The vessel was to be valued, and he valued her at 4,000 dollars; his share of this would be 3,000 dollars. I then agreed to pay him 1,600 dollars, which, with 1,400 dollars balance which he owed us, would be the amount of his share of the vessel and he would give me up the power of attorney. This was done and we were clear of each other.

The net proceeds of our 21 bales of cotton sold in Havana was about 3,600 dollars, which, after redeeming the vessel, left about 2,000 dollars.

With my other partner it was not so easy to settle; he was a sort of *status quo*. He was still due to me the balance for his share of the vessel, which was more than his share of the proceeds of the voyage would amount to, and I was not prepared to buy him out altogether, and as his representative took no active part and was seldom seen while the vessel was in port, things remained as they were with him.

CHAPTER XI.

Trying to get a freight—Confederate regulations as to inward cargoes—Sympathizing speculators—Patriotism *versus* Number One—Basis of blockade running changed from Nassau to Havana—Rigging of the market—Arrival of the *Harriet Lane* and *Matagorda*—Attention of steamers turned to Galveston—My old friend Captain Dave turns up—His views as to costly vessels for blockade running—He invests in a cheap one—Arrangements for a second voyage.

THE question was now, what was to be done next. It was already into the month of April, and it was a very bad time to make a trip, owing to the lengthened days and the prevailing calms. There would be no chance of good steady winds before September, and there would be on the Texas coast about three hours more daylight each day than in winter, and the danger *of capture* would be very great.

On the other hand, I opined that to lay here heavy loss

was certain. The vessel not being coppered, the sea-worms would penetrate her bottom, unless often docked and painted; expenses were high, and it was almost impossible to avoid being victimized by the numerous harpies who regarded blockade runners as a legitimate prey to pick at; and I felt that if I was to lose what little I had, I would rather lose it under the guns of an honest cruiser, than have it wheedled away from me by the flattery of pretended friends; so I determined to venture a trip if I could make arrangements to do so.

The vessel was taken to the ship-yard and put on the slip-dock to be thoroughly examined, caulked, and otherwise put in the best sailing trim preparative for another voyage.

As I have already said, specie money was not to be had in the Confederate States and it was not to the interest of blockade runners to run a heavy risk on the inward trip, by taking in a valuable cargo, and many had run in with light cargoes, knowing that they could always obtain a cargo of cotton cheap, or a freight outward at very high rates.

This, however, had now been stopped by the Confederate authorities, and stringent rules had been enforced whereby all vessels entering a Confederate port must take in a full and valuable cargo.

To obtain this cargo was what I desired either as freight or on vessel's account, and as a large part of the money we had left would be expended in the repairs of the vessel, it would be necessary—if we could not get a freight—to get some one to take a share in the adventure, and as there were so many merchants and speculators who sympathized excessively with the Confederate States and took great interest in furnishing them with supplies, I thought there would be no difficulty in making an engagement.

After applying to several of them, I found their terms to be all about the same; which was, that they were exceedingly wishful to sell me goods for a cargo, but none willing to take a share in the adventure or run any risk. As an exemplification I will mention one case.

There was a gentleman who was one of the most prominent I have referred to, whose office seemed a sort of head-quarters

for Confederate exiles. He took a special interest in the smaller class of blockade runners almost to assuming a directorate over them, advising them as to their best policy and particularly directing them as to the proper kind of goods they should carry into the Confederate States, his whole heart and mind being, as he said, given to the cause.

From this gentleman I received a message saying that he desired to see me privately on important business, and as he seemed to take a very great interest in furnishing supplies to the Confederate States, I had no doubt but that he would be ready to make an arrangement with me, I therefore lost no time in calling upon him.

When I went to his office I found him engaged in administering a severe rebuke to some newly arrived Confederate immigrant, and as I entered I heard him use the words, "When a man wishes to serve his country, he has no business to stand upon claptraps."

It was in vain that his trembling auditor pleaded that he had been ill-treated, and that less deserving men had been promoted over his head. This ardent patriot maintained that it was the duty of every true Southerner to do as he himself had done, and that was, to devote his whole heart, energies, and substance to the Confederate cause without quibbling about promotion in office.

On my entering the subject was dropped, and this self-sacrificing champion of the cause came up and shook my hand, saying, "Come away, captain; I am glad to see you! Come into this room; I wish to have a talk with you."

When he had shut the door he assumed a somewhat important and consequential air, and spoke in a tone which he seemed to try to impress upon me was private and confidential.

"Is your vessel ready for sea?" said he.

"Not yet," said I; "but she will be in a day or two."

"Well now," said he, "we have got a nice little consignment of goods; we have got them recently out from London. They have been most carefully selected and put up expressly for the Confederate market; they are expressly what is wanted. *We will make* an invoice of them to you at the very lowest

prices, and all we ask seeing they are for the Confederate States, is just a small commission for our trouble."

I scarcely understood him. "Am I to understand," said I, "that you wish to ship those goods into the Confederacy consigned to a party there."

"Oh no," said he, "what I mean is, that we will let you have them at the very lowest market price. They have been expressly selected for the Confederate market, and all we ask is just a small commission for our trouble."

He spoke in such a consequential and important way that I scarcely knew whether to laugh or swear at him.

"And is this what you wanted to see me about?" I said; "you had the assurance to call me away from my vessel and from my business to ask me to buy goods from you."

"Oh, but this is a particular case; we are only letting you have the goods at that low price because we wish the Confederate States to get the benefit of them."

"I am bored every hour of the day with parties coming to me wishing to serve the Confederate States by selling to me their goods, and all with the same story of their goods being selected expressly for the Confederate market; but you all seem to have the same object in view, that is, to sell your goods, and get your money without running any risk. Now, I know as well as you do what is wanted within the Confederacy, as I have just come from that place, and if I wish to buy goods I can buy them in the open market."

As I said this, I rose and opened the door and walked out of the room.

When I passed into the outer room, I found the gentleman whom he had been lecturing still sitting there; this reminded me of what the merchant had been saying to him about serving his country, and I turned back and said to the merchant—

"I heard you lecturing that gentleman just now, about how a man ought to serve his country, even as you do. Now, if you are so zealous in your country's cause as you represented to him, and desirous, as you say, that the Confederate States should get the benefit of those goods, I will tell you what I will do with you. If you will put your goods on board of my vessel, I *will sign* a bill of lading to deliver them in a Con-

federate port—"Dangers of the seas and enemies excepted"—to any agent you may wish to consign them to, and this I will do without charging you one cent for freight."

He seemed somewhat taken aback and annoyed that I should have spoken out in this way in presence of the other party.

He stood confused for a little, and after some hesitation said that he was very desirous to serve the Confederacy, but such an arrangement would be entirely out of their line of business.

He still tried to impress upon me the great advantage I would gain by buying the goods which he said his devotion to the Southerners' cause had induced him to sell at an enormous sacrifice.

As I was desirous to get information as to the price of goods, and know the amount of the sacrifice he was going to make, I told him to send me a list of his goods and the prices, and I would think over the matter. He promised to do this and pressed me very hard to come and dine with him the following evening.

This invitation I declined, and about two days afterwards I received from him a list of his goods and prices, which were just about the same as the goods could have been bought for in any retail store, which was enormously high, as all goods suitable for the Confederate market had been run up to a fabulous price. The article coffee, which was greatly in demand in the Southern States, had been run up to more than three times its usual price in Havana.

I may here say that up to this time blockade running by steamers had been confined almost entirely to the Atlantic ports, while nearly the whole trade into the Gulf States had been done by sailing craft, mostly light-draught schooners. When Charleston and the other ports on the Atlantic were captured, or so closely invested that entrance to them was almost impossible, many of those steamers came to Havana to try what could be done between that port and the Gulf States, and the basis for blockade running was transferred from *Nassau* to Havana.

Steamers, however, were not much in favour at Havana

for blockade-running purposes, and it was considered by some that their utility for this trade was more ideal than real, but of this I will speak hereafter.

Havana having now become the principal centre for blockade running, a crowd of speculators soon found their way to the place, who bought up the goods in the limited market, and run them up to a high figure to sell to blockade runners, representing them, of course, as consignments recently got out from Europe specially selected for the Confederate market. And while trumpeting their zeal for the Confederate cause, they took special care to pocket large profits without running any risk. While to those who actually run the blockade and incurred the risk and danger, but little accrued.

About this time there was one day considerable excitement in Havana, caused by a somewhat important arrival from Texas. Two steamers, the *Harriet Lane* and the *Matagorda*, arrived together after a very close and exciting chase all the way from Galveston. The *Harriet Lane* I have already referred to. She was a United States war vessel, which had been captured at the time Galveston was retaken by the Confederates. The *Matagorda* was a vessel which previous to the war had plied between New Orleans, Galveston, and other places.

These vessels, being of deep draught, had of course to run out by the main channel, and were seen and chased, but managed to keep their distance from their pursuers, who sometimes got so close up as to open fire upon them, but they succeeded in reaching Havana without damage.

The *Harriet Lane* was never used for any purpose afterwards during the war, but lay in Havana harbour until the end of the war, when she was again restored to the United States Government.

The *Matagorda* being of lighter draught of water, afterwards made one or two trips to Galveston, but was eventually captured.

The arrival of these steamers at this time with valuable cargoes of cotton, was, however, the means of exciting action to further adventures in steamers into Galveston.

During the time the *Rob Roy* was undergoing repairs, who

should come to the yard one evening but my old friend Captain McLusky, or Captain Dave, as he was familiarly called.

He had succeeded in running out of the Brazos River and getting safe into Tampico, where he had left his small vessel and had come up to Havana to purchase a larger one.

In the course of conversation about vessels I mentioned the one which had been at Tampico the same time as us, the *Sylvia*, which the captain had brought up to Havana in order to sell, and I thought she was a very fine vessel, and would suit him well.

He said she would cost too much money to run the blockade with.

The *Rob Roy* was at the time upon the ways, and her hull had been closely inspected and found in excellent condition, and the general opinion of the vessel was that she was well modelled and altogether a very fine vessel of her class, and it was with some pride that I took Dave to have a look at her.

"A very fine vessel," said Dave. "Oh, yes, a very fine vessel; but not at all for blockade running."

"How do you mean?" said I.

"How do I mean," said he. "Very well. Now, after you have given her this repair, what do you think will be the value of her?"

"About 5,000 dollars."

"Just so, just so; and you intend to risk 5,000 dollars to run through the blockade into Texas at this time of the year. Why, I have been looking at a thing to-day that will carry as much cotton as the *Rob Roy* on a foot and a half less water, and I can buy her for 500 dollars."

"And what kind of a thing will that be?"

"Never mind," said he, "you will perhaps see her to-morrow. I have just come to see this man about getting her bottom cleaned and caulked a little, and if he can do it I will bring her to this yard to-morrow. I know all about her, I fitted her out in Trinity River, and she took out a cargo of cotton to Tampico, and has managed to come up here, and when she has done that she will be able to make another trip."

On the following day Dave brought his vessel to the yard,

and I went to see her. The owner of the yard was gazing at her in something like silent astonishment. Dave looked at her himself and gave a loud laugh. I did the same, and remarked that surely Captain Dave had now got to the height of his eccentricities.

The owner of the yard, who was a Spaniard, made no remark, but indicated by his look that he was quite ready to do anything to her in the way of repairs so long as he was paid for it.

She was a square barge, perfectly square at the ends, and flat on the bottom. She might be about seventy-five feet long and about twenty-two feet broad, and about six feet deep. She had been built and used for carrying cordwood from Trinity River to Galveston. A long pole was stuck out at one end to serve as a bowsprit, and a rudder fitted on at the other end.

Her bottom was planked longitudinally, and a stout plank or log ran up the centre, forming a keel and bottom for the centre-board casing. She had a centre-board, and was well decked over and strongly planked with thick planks. She was fitted with two masts and rigged as a schooner, and when at a distance under sail, looked much like an ordinary cargo vessel. She might have done well enough to sail and carry heavy loads in such a place as Galveston Bay, but how she had ever managed to get to Havana, I was puzzled to know.

About the same time my old friend Mr. R. M—— came to the yard and took a look at the *Rob Roy* as she lay on the ways.

He asked me if I had made any arrangements for a trip yet. I said I had not. He said I might come and see him the following day, and he would make me an offer.

On the following day I called upon him. He asked what value I now placed upon the vessel. I said 5,000 dollars when repaired and fitted out ready for sea.

He then said that his offer was that he would furnish a cargo equal in value to that amount, which cargo he would guarantee would satisfy the requirements of the Confederate Government as to inward cargo, and purchase much more cotton than the vessel could carry out, and the surplus would

be invested in cotton bonds, which were still worth something in Havana. He would then become owner of half of the vessel, and I would be owner of half of the cargo. We would then be equal partners in the vessel and cargo, each paying his half of the disbursements, out of which he would allow me for my services as captain 500 dollars, to be paid in advance before sailing, and 7 dollars for every bale of cotton when landed in a neutral port.

The cargo which he had to put on board consisted chiefly of arms, which the Confederate Government in Texas stood much in want of at that time.

This offer I accepted, and I asked him to make a memorandom of it in writing, which he did, and handed it to me.

I then got a list of the cargo he proposed to furnish. It consisted of 200 Enfield rifles with bayonets and accoutrements, 400 Belgium muskets with bayonets, 400 cavalry swords, six cases of saddlery and accoutrements, twenty-five boxes of ammunition, a large box of cavalry currycombs and horse brushes, and several bales and cases of blankets, clothing, boots and shoes, hardware, and other goods. Besides this it was good policy to have a good supply of some things which were much esteemed by the Southern people, but which the blockade had cut off and made extremely rare, and in some parts almost unknown, such as tea, coffee, cheese, spices, &c., also thread, needles, and such furnishings. Brandies and wines as well as all spirituous liquors were forbidden to be taken in, but they were received with great thankfulness if given as donations for the use of the hospitals. All these might be entered as ship stores.

This cargo, although valuable, was far from filling up the hold of the schooner, and as I knew that a good inward cargo had great weight with the authorities in the Confederacy, I sent word to Mr. Helm, the Confederate States Consul, that I would sail in a few days for Texas, and I would take free of freight any goods which he might wish to send in.

I received a reply thanking me for the offer, and saying that he would send by my vessel 400 guns. He also said that he *had some important* despatches to send to General Magruder, *which he* would confide to my care.

The vessel had now been launched and lay at the Regles, which is on the opposite side of the bay or harbour from the main town of Havana. She was lying at the yard wharf, and alongside of her lay Captain McLusky's *Scow*, as I called her, which he had got repaired and tolerably well fitted out with a small cabin and forecastle, and being very tight and strongly built, might have stood some rough weather at sea, but from her square box shape I could not see how she could sail on a wind at all.

I frequently bantered Dave on the appearance of his craft.

"Never mind," said Dave, "we will see who is the wisest. Now you see, if you had sold your vessel when you came to Havana for 4,000 dollars, which you could easily have got for her, and bought a thing like this for 500 dollars, you could have bought a cargo for yourself and have something left to fall back upon. If you got captured your loss would not be so great, and if you made the run all right you would have a big load of cotton and the proceeds all to yourself."

"There is, perhaps, something in that," said I, "if you look upon it in that way; but then your chances of being captured are much greater."

"Not so very much," said he. "If you are seen by a steamer you are captured any way: no matter what kind of a vessel you have your chances of escape are not great."

"But steamers," said I, "are mostly along the coast and near the blockaded ports, whereas their sailing vessels are cruising all over the Gulf, and are the greatest danger. Had you seen the hard chase I had from one of their sailing vessels on the outward trip, you would have seen the advantage of having a good weatherly vessel; whereas that thing of yours would have fallen a prey at once."

"Oh," said he, "I have heard enough of blowing about that chase; but you escaped only by the luck of a lull and a change in the wind."

"Still, if we had not had a good vessel we could not have held our own to escape even by that; but who told you about it."

"One of your men that left you at Tampico."

"Oh, that was George. Had he got sober by the time you left there?"

"Just about it; he had spent all his money and was looking for a vessel to ship upon; but I think," added he, "that you will find the sailing vessels are off now, and they have steamers all over the Gulf, and you see there are two of their cruisers in Havana now."

"But," said I, "leaving out the danger of capture by the cruisers, your lives will be in danger in that craft; you will be at the mercy of the wind and seas."

"Not much danger from the weather at this time of the year;" said he, "besides, I have a good large boat, and you will find that on the trip over the sea will be as calm as a millpond, and the want of wind will be the trouble."

"I see, Dave," said I, "that, although you have become personally reckless, you still preserve your old Scotch characteristics in being cautious about the bawbees."

"Ah," said Dave, "you will find that is the point they all steer by, Scotch and all others; and let me tell you this—keep your vessel always heading for the Almighty Dollar, and lay her course as close to it as you can."

"I have tried to do that," said I; "but head-winds, rocks, and currents, always are against me, and drive me out of my course."

"Never mind that," said Dave; "lay her close to the wind and keep your luff."

It was now getting dark, and work in the yard was over for the day.

Dave said that he had an appointment to meet Captain M—— that night at the Louvre, and he asked me to come along with him.

As I had already met Captain M—— at Mr. Helm's dinner party, I agreed to go.

The Louvre was a very large café which was outside the walls of the town, and in the evening was the resort of the better class of café frequenters.

The war between the North and South being the great excitement of the times, and Havana being a city of some importance, neutral, and situated almost between the combatants, was of course replete with partisans of both sides.

It was generally understood that the extremists and talking

class of both sides frequented only their respective cafés, where out of each other's hearing they waged a desperate war of words against each other.

The Louvre, was, however, of a higher class, and supposed to be neutral, and here the more active, and at the same time more mild and dignified on both sides often met, exchanged courtesies, and often entered into conversation.

We here met Captain M. and took our seat at one of the marble tables.

Captain M. was a tall, well-built, and handsome man. He was, I think, a native of Baltimore. He was a well-learned and skilful seaman; gentlemanly in his manner, and a bold and successful blockade runner. Some one or two of the steamers which had lately come to Havana was going to attempt to run into Galveston, and he was expecting to get the command of one of them.

We had sat some time enjoying our conversation, and observing the different personages moving about in the throng, when a party of three Federal naval officers, who were wandering listlessly about, happened to come near our table.

"Here," cried Captain M., in a laughing way, "come away and join us."

"What are you?" they replied, also laughing; "A set of blockade runners?"

"We are just that," said Captain M., "and come away and have a drink with us."

"All right," said one, drawing up a chair, "I never object to meet with blockade runners."

"Especially at sea, if they have a good cargo of cotton," rejoined Captain M.

"You are right," replied the other, "although I sometimes think that if I had not been in the United States Navy I would have been a blockade runner myself."

"And I," said another, "next to a naval officer would be a blockade runner."

Captain M. having ordered drinks all round, the conversation became general.

Captain M. inquired of them about a friend of his, Captain

C. of the L., who had been captured, and he seemed to have been long detained.

They did not know of that case, but thought it most likely that as the capture was off Mobile that the prize would be taken to Key West, and that Captain C. would be there.

"But can't he get away from Key West? Are not steamers often going from that place to New Orleans?"

"Yes, but it is probable that he may be detained at Key West."

"Detained! What for? You don't imprison blockade runners I am sure."

"No, but they are sometimes detained as witnesses to give evidence against the vessel, when the trial comes on in the prize court."

"And how long do they detain them?"

"Until the court sits, and that is uncertain; they are sometimes not in a hurry, and generally like to keep them a good long while. It keeps them out of mischief."

"I know of one," said I, "who was not long detained."

"When, and who was that?"

"One Captain Downs," said I, "of a small vessel called the *Enriquita*."

"Oh, Downs!" they all cried out, "Captain Downs. The *Iniquity* he used to call his vessel. It was us that captured him. A queer old chap he is. We had all but let him pass on the first overhaul."

I then asked them the particulars about the capture, and they told me the story in pretty much the same words as Downs had told me, and they added that Downs had kept them in amusement by his humour until they got to New Orleans.

They said it was much better for the crew of a captured blockade runner when she was taken into New Orleans than when she was taken into Key West. As in New Orleans they were never detained so long, as prize courts are oftener held; and as New Orleans was a large city full of people from all parts of the world, they generally met with plenty of friends, *whereas* Key West was little better than a sand-bank, and *they were* there little better than if in a penal settlement.

"Well then," said I, "when you capture me take me to New Orleans."

They said that they would do so with pleasure if I would just let them know when I was coming out with a good load of cotton.

Such was about the substance of the conversation. Political or national questions, or anything like quizzing on either side being strictly avoided, and of course they learned nothing from us regarding vessels to sail or expected with cargoes, or stratagems adapted by blockade runners; and we learned nothing whatever of the strength or disposition of the blockading fleet in the Gulf or on the Texas coast.

I merely mention the incident of this meeting and conversation because I generally found the United States naval officers to be in the usual phrase very good fellows—and like most of the officers who took a brave and active part on either side in this war—to be high-toned, honourable, and sensible men, and quite free from that rancour and hatred indulged in by narrow-minded political partisans on both sides, who while keeping out of danger themselves, and often becoming rich by war jobbery, kept pouring forth the most scurrilous opprobrium against their respective opponents, and inciting them to cruelties and outrage.

I was now thinking over what port I would try to enter. I was a little sick with the Brazos River on account of the troubles I had had there on last trip, and the entrance to it now was generally blockaded, and it would be impossible to enter during the day, and the bar was dangerous to enter at night without a pilot.

Captain Dave had determined to make for St. Louis Pass at the west end of Galveston Island. This was a shallow entrance on which there was only about four feet of water, and as it was supposed impossible for any vessel to enter there, it was not blockaded. Dave's vessel drawing only about three feet, he meant to make for it.

It was impossible, however, for the *Rob Roy* to enter there, and on the advice of Captain M. I determined to shape for Galveston, and take my chance of getting past the fleet.

Captain M. was well acquainted with all the shallow

entrances to Galveston Bay, and he gave me some information as to how a light draught vessel like the *Rob Roy* might enter from the eastward or windward side: they were as follows: "On the coast, about thirty miles to the east of Galveston, there are to be seen from sea three lumps or hillocks near each other. Steer for them, and come into three fathoms of water about a mile from the beach. Anchor there, and wait until near nightfall. As night sets in raise anchor and steer about S.W., following the coast along, and keeping in three fathoms water. As you come near the reefs at the entrance to Galveston Bay the water shoals, but keep your course until the water shoals down to about six or seven feet. You are now in the channel, and must proceed cautiously, keeping in that depth which will alter your course to about W.S.W. Keep on this course till the water suddenly deepens to about fourteen feet, change your course now quickly to N.W., and follow this channel up, which will take you into Galveston Bay, and out of danger."

I knew that the trip was likely to be long and tedious, and there would be great danger from calms, drifting by currents, and long daylight, and I expected we would spend much time lying with our sails down.

Having had the experience of the former voyage, I resolved to be well provided with everything to meet these exigencies.

I took about 200 fathoms of rope, and a good heavy grapnel to use in soundings during a calm, to detect a current, and prevent the vessel drifting with it.

I also provided four long and handy sweeps, which I knew would have some effect in propelling the vessel along in a calm. I advised my friend Captain Dave to try the plan of using oars to pull out of danger during a calm, but he laughed at the idea of rowing his vessel.

I also thought of something to screen the man at the helm from the shot of small arms in case of being chased by boats as we had been on the last trip outward.

Not wishing to have any conspicuous arrangement to attract attention I thought of managing this by a small boat. *The schooner* had davits at the stern, but our boat was far too *large to* be carried at them. I therefore thought of getting

a small boat to carry at the davits, into which any kind of stores, such as firewood, might be put which would form a protection for the man at the wheel.

The difficulty was in getting a suitable boat for this; but I saw a very suitable dingey belonging to a Yankee brig which lay near to us.

I felt a little delicacy in asking the master if he would sell it, thinking he might have some scruples about selling his boat to a blockade runner, for although the brig was under the British flag, I knew her to be a genuine down easter.

I therefore got another person to approach the master, instructing him to offer a good price for the boat, but not to say for whom or for what purpose it was intended.

This device, however, was of no avail. Mr. Yankee was too cute, and before he made any bargain he wormed out of the man who the boat was for, and all about the schooner and where she was bound for.

He was quite willing to trade, would sell the boat for a good price, and more than the boat. He had lots of fine provisions and stores which he had brought out as a spec on his own account; "And," said he, "just tell the captain to come on board and I will trade the boat, and perhaps some other things he may be in want of."

I went on board and saw this captain, and made a bargain for the boat. He then referred to the war and the blockade. He said he was a strong Union man, but still sympathised with the South, and his sentiments were—"Preserve the Union, and accept Jeff Davis for president."

He then told me that he had brought out a number of things as a spec on his own account, and he had not sold them all, and as he was about to sail and did not wish to take them back with him he would sell them to me cheap.

There were several things in the way of stores, but he particularly directed my attention to a quantity of pickled mackerel in kits, which he said he knew would be greatly prized in Texas, as he knew that place, having traded to Galveston before the war, and Galveston was always a great market for pickled mackerel, and that article used to form a large *part of his* cargo to that place.

I said I was aware of that, and I had already ordered some to be sent on board along with the ship's stores.

He said he had brought out a large quantity of the mackerel, and sold them at one dollar per kit, but if I would take what was left, about thirty-six kits, he would let me have the lot for thirty dollars.

I agreed to take them and also about two dozen small cheeses, the remnant of a lot which he had sold to the speculative merchants in Havana for half a dollar each. I took also some more small articles, and put all into the boat and went back to the schooner, thinking I had made a good bargain with the Yankee, which I certainly had, for when my stores came on board I found the mackerel to be of the same lot, and they were charged to me in the account of stores at four and a half dollars per kit. Cheeses also of the same lot charged to me at two and a half dollars each. Such was about a sample of the profits made at that time by merchants who supplied goods to blockade runners.

Amongst others who at this time came to Havana to reap some benefit from the stir caused by blockade running were several photographers, and they were doing a good business, and albums had been for the first time introduced, and had become all the rage. Every one was having his carte taken, and I was as big a fool as the others.

Captain Dave had invested in an album, and was having it filled up with cartes of his friends. He got one from me and one from Captain M. At the bottom of the carte there was a space in the album for the name of the original, and he wrote, "Captain M. of the *D.*," and "Captain W. of the *Rob Roy*," at the bottom of the respective cartes. We little knew at the time where our cartes were destined to be exhibited.

We had now got our cargo on board, and crew shipped. A good crew that I could depend upon, mostly my old hands. Fred, the Swede, who had been with me since we first left Matamoras, Hagan, who joined us in the Brazos River, the mate, and one man who joined us at Tampico, and two others.

We were now all ready to sail, and I only waited for a favourable opportunity.

There were two Federal gunboats which lay between us and the Moro Castle, and which we should have to pass on the way out to sea, and I was pretty certain that they knew we had a cargo of arms on board, but they were to a considerable extent powerless, and we were cleared for Belize, Honduras.

As no vessels were allowed to leave or enter Havana harbour between sunset and sunrise, the best time to leave was just about sunset, so that if any cruisers were lying in the offing we could come to, under the guns of the Moro, until it got quite dark, and then put to sea.

Captain Dave had determined to sail at the same time that we sailed, and as I had been laughing at his vessel, he wished to bet with me a case of brandy that he would arrive in Texas before me if not captured. I did not, however, take the bet, as I intended to creep along cautiously.

I was now well manned and prepared, and my policy was—when it became calm to take down all sail, and make the vessel as unconspicuous as possible; keep a sharp look-out from the mast-head, and if anything appeared on the horizon to get out the sweeps and pull away in the opposite direction before we were observed.

Our vessel being small, the hull very low, and when the sails were down, by keeping a good look-out from the mast-head we could see a cruiser sometime before she could see us.

Everything being now ready we got what we called the mail on board. This consisted of letters for people in Texas and other parts of the Confederate States, west of the Mississippi River, from all parts of the world. There being no other means of transit, letters for the Confederate States were generally sent to friends or agents in Havana with a view of getting them sent to Galveston or Mobile by some blockade-running vessel.

I also got a packet of despatches from Mr. Helm, Confederate States Consul at Havana, to General Magruder, with directions to destroy them if we fell into the hands of the enemy.

We now awaited a favourable wind, and were wishful to get away, as Havana is a very bad place for a vessel's bottom fouling, and every day we lay was injuring the sailing qualities of the *vessel.*

CHAPTER XII.

Second voyage—Departure from Havana—Captain Dave sails same night—Light winds and calms—Plans to keep out of sight of cruisers—Narrow escape—We meet an old friend—We don't like her looks—We make a warlike display—She sheers off—A long passage—Get in with difficulty—Captain Dave ahead of us—He brings in with him a naval Federal officer and prize crew.

AT last a steady breeze sprang up from the south, which freshened towards the afternoon, and we stood down the bay just before sunset.

We passed the two Federal cruisers as they lay at anchor. We saw the officers scrutinizing us with their glasses, but as neither of the vessels had steam up, it was impossible that they could follow us that night.

Our direct course was about W.N.W., but as that was likely to be watched, we thought best to keep out of it. We might, with the wind we had, have kept to the north of this course, which would have placed us more to windward, but that would have thrown us in the way of cruisers on the look-out for vessels from Mobile. We therefore stood to the westward, which was also the course we should follow according to our clearance.

Captain Dave sailed along with us, but we lost sight of him during the night. There were also two other vessels—one of them the *Sylvia*—sailed the same evening, but it was arranged that all should take different routes, so as better to evade the cruisers.

We kept on about due west for about three days, but the breeze got gradually less, and at last died away.

It was then down all sail and keep a strict look-out from the mast-head, with sweeps ready to pull out of sight should anything appear on the horizon. Soon, however, a light breeze sprang up from the eastward, and we stood away to the northward. For nine or ten days we kept creeping on this way more than half of the time lying with our sails down.

We had got to within 150 miles of Galveston without *sighting anything*, but we were now on the dangerous ground,

and made it a point always before daybreak to take down all sail, whether there was wind or not, and as soon as it got clear to scan the horizon all round, and if anything was seen in the distance, to keep sail down until it went out of sight, or pull away from it if it was calm.

The first serious scare we got on this trip was when about 120 miles from Galveston. A very light breeze had been blowing all night, and we were making about two knots, but before the day began to break we took down all sail. As day broke, right ahead, at little more than three miles' distance, there was a large steamer steering to the westward right across our track. Such was the position of the two vessels, that if we had continued under sail there would have been danger of a collision. She was certainly a cruiser, and we considered it to be all up with us now.

The men ran below to get their money out of their chests and hide it under their stockings, and I got the letters and despatches ready to consign to the deep.

It was still gray dawn, and the morning was somewhat hazy, and the steamer had passed our track, and we were upon her quarter before it got clear daylight. It was evident that they had not yet noticed us, but we knew that with the clear daylight they would soon observe us, and put about and make a prize of us. How we wished for a fog or a shower of rain to obscure us!

We got out the sweeps and pulled, but not so much to increase the distance as to head off from the cruiser and bring our two masts in line with her, and make us less easy to be observed.

The steamer kept on her course, and as she was now nearly five miles distant, we began to think it just possible that she might pass on without observing us.

She did, greatly to our relief. The look-out was probably sleepy and looking only ahead, and a sail being what they pictured in their minds, our low hull and bare poles never caught their attention, and it was evident that they never thought of such an unscamanlike act as to lay and roll under bare poles in a calm or light breeze. Unseamanlike or not, I was now more than ever convinced of the wisdom of the

device, and if they did not believe any one would do such a thing so much the better.

There was now some days of very light winds and calms, so that during the day we were the greater part of the time with our sails down, keeping watch from the masthead. Several times we saw cruisers in the distance, but got out of sight by hard pulling at the sweeps before we were observed.

At length a steady breeze sprang up from the south-east, and we were getting along very well, when we sighted a small schooner ahead, which I took to be one of those vessels which left Havana at the same time with us. As we got nearer the men thought it was the *Sylvia*.

When we first saw this vessel we were steering about north by west with a free sheet, and she was nearly right ahead, close hauled on the starboard tack, by which her course must have been about east by north.

Soon after, however, she changed tack and stood on the port tack, which caused her to head about south by west and towards us. I was astonished at this, because it was understood that when one blockade runner sighted another at sea they should steer away from each other. This was in case of a cruiser, seeing the one and bearing down upon her, would also see the other, and both would be captured.

We were now certain that it was the *Sylvia*, but why she was tacking to windward I could not understand, when she had a fair wind for the Texas coast, unless she wished to speak and compare longitudes, as she had done before off the coast of Mexico, but at the same time, I remembered that it was not the same captain that was upon her now.

"Yes," said the mate, "and take care that she has not changed captain and crew since she left Havana, and is now in the hands of the Yankees, and they intend to make a prize of us, so I would advise you to be on your guard."

"If that be the case," said I, "we had better haul up at once and keep to windward of her," and we immediately luffed up and stood on the wind with a good full about east-north-east.

I knew that as she could not lay any higher we must pass her about a mile to windward, and we should then be able to *have a better look* at her; and in case it might be that she had

lost her reckoning, I took off one of the hatch-covers, and having blackened it over, I chalked the longitude upon it in letters large enough to be seen at that distance, and when we were abreast of them we held it up for them to see, while I closely examined her with the glass.

Few men were to be seen upon her, but those I could see I took to be men-of-war's men, and I suspected there were others keeping down out of sight.

I had now no doubt that it was the *Sylvia*, that she had been captured and had a prize crew on board, and they were now trying to make a prize of us.

The sailing qualities of the two vessels were nearly equal, rather in our favour, and I had no fear of them overhauling us; but it was not yet 2 p.m., and the wind might die away, and I knew the *Sylvia* had a good large boat, and they might attempt to board us with an armed crew, and as neither vessel had hoisted their flag, I thought there would be no harm in making some display of force.

I then called the crew, and told them that I would not ask them to fight, but that was the *Sylvia*, which had been captured, and was, I thought, on the way to New Orleans in charge of a prize crew, and they would like to make a prize of us if we would submit to go quietly along with them, but if they saw that we were not willing to submit and had arms to protect ourselves, they would not make any attempt, as there would not be more than six of them, and there were eight of us, all as good men and well armed; and all I would ask them to do would be to make a display of armed men on deck, which I had no doubt would be sufficient to warn them off, as they knew that most of the captains of blockade runners now held commissions in the Confederate service. The mate then told them that a prize crew on a captured vessel had tried to board a schooner from Mobile, and the crew of the schooner had beaten them back with handspikes.

We now saw that the *Sylvia* had tacked and was standing after us.

The men readily agreed; some even expressed their determination to fight rather than allow themselves to be captured by a prize crew.

We then opened a case of Enfield rifles. In this we had some difficulty, as the boxes were lined with tin, but we got out a sufficient number, and brought them on deck and fixed the bayonets, every man taking one except the man at the helm.

We were now to the northward of the *Sylvia*, and our course clear before us, and the *Sylvia* to leeward. I now put the vessel upon our course again, crossing the bows of the other vessel at about a quarter of a mile distance.

We now made a display of our force in the best way we could devise, taking care that at least seven men might be seen, each with a rifle and fixed bayonet. This had the desired effect, and we soon saw the *Sylvia* luffing up and standing away to the eastward.

We saw her afterwards making some signals which we did not understand, and whether this was intended for us, or to frighten us by pretending to signal with some warship in the distance we did not know. We scanned the horizon from the mast-head, but saw nothing. We watched her closely during the rest of the day, in case she might creep up upon us during the night and take us unawares.

The light breeze continued during the night, but died away about daybreak, and all sail was taken in and everything stowed, so as to be as unconspicuous as possible.

I now supposed that we must be about thirty or forty miles south-east of Galveston, and taking a heave of the lead, we found we were in about thirty fathoms water.

This was rather a good place to lay, as it was about twenty miles to the southward of the general track of cruisers between New Orleans and Galveston, which track I wished, if possible, to cross during the night. We therefore got out our coil of rope and let down our grapnel, which would not only prevent us drifting with the current, but indicate the direction and strength of the current.

Throughout this day it continued quite calm without a breath of wind, and we swung from our grapnel, the current being from about S.S.E.

To ascertain the strength of the current, and if the grapnel was holding, chips of wood were thrown overboard, and the *speed* at which they drifted astern noted.

I got here, during the day, the exact latitude and longitude, so that, knowing the exact position of the vessel and the direction and force of the current, we would be able to make a good landfall if a breeze sprung up towards the evening, which was very likely.

All that day nothing appeared in sight, and just about sunset a light breeze sprung up from S.S.E. This was all that was desired, and we got up the grapnel and made sail, and I set the course to make the land about thirty miles to the eastward of Galveston.

The breeze was very light, but steady, and I wished to time so as to be within four miles of the land by daybreak, but the vessel's bottom having got a little foul by the tedious summer voyage, the speed was not great. And when daylight broke the land was not in sight, but it was somewhat hazy; but this was all the better in the position we were in, as we were less apt to be seen from a distance.

About 8 a.m. the sun broke out bright, and I was just going to take a sight to get the exact longitude, when the cry of "Land ahead!" was given.

The haze had lifted, and there, right ahead, about four miles distant, were the three mounds described by Captain M. in his directions. This was everything we wished, and we soon came to anchor in three fathoms water about a mile from the shore.

All sail was now taken down, and not a bit too soon, for just as everything was stowed away, a cruiser was observed coming from the eastward.

The policy now, if she came down upon us, was to run the vessel on the beach, by which means the greater part of the cargo might be saved, as the Federals would not attempt to land or come near the shore in their boats. I was very unwilling to beach the vessel, and determined not to do it till the last extremity.

As the wind had now almost died away and there was very little sea, I determined to go closer to the beach, as close as I could go without touching. We accordingly got up the anchor, and pulled with the sweeps to within half a mile of the shore, where we dropped our grapnel, backed by a heavy

piece of chain, and then payed out line and backed with the sweeps still further in, keeping the vessel's head pointed towards the steamer, in order to bring her two masts into one and make her less easy to be seen. We brought her into nine feet of water, where we dropped anchor.

This was no doubt a critical position to be in had it come on to blow from seawards. Seamen would be apt to call it madness to take a vessel into such a position on an open coast, but it must be remembered that the little vessel, although having come from Havana, was drawing only about four feet of water, and could be propelled by oars and handled as easily as a ship's longboat.

The cruiser was now nearly abreast and about six or seven miles distant, but she made no appearance of turning in towards us.

At the same time a body of Confederate mounted troops came down and drew up upon the beach.

Whether the cruiser did not perceive us, or whether she saw us and thought it was a vessel already on the beach and surrounded by Confederate troops (a thing not uncommon at that time) I do not know; but she passed on, seemingly bound for Galveston. Meanwhile the Confederate troops remained drawn up upon the beach, and I knew it to be De Bray's regiment, which was stationed to the eastward of Galveston; and as I knew some of the officers, I resolved to land and deliver the mails, and get some information about the blockading fleet.

I therefore got out the boat, and taking four men, succeeded in landing safely, and delivered the letters and despatches to the commanding officer, which he promised to forward at once to Galveston.

The information as to the blockading fleet was that it would be very difficult to enter at Galveston. Thirteen war-vessels had been counted off the place on the previous day, and it was supposed that they often at night sent their launches into the narrow channels near the shore.

We now returned on board, and began to prepare for the night's adventure.

About 4 p.m. a light breeze sprang up, and as we had about

thirty miles to go, I resolved to start early so as to have command of time.

The time I would wish to run past the fleet would be between 3 and 4 a.m., which is about the sleepiest time, and the men on watch are more intent listening for eight bells than looking out for vessels.

About sunset we got up anchor and set lower sails and steered S.W., keeping in about three fathoms water. The night was dark, but clear, and the breeze kept steady.

About midnight I calculated we had run about twenty miles and were now getting near the guarded waters. I knew that the narrow channel through which we were to pass led between the shore and a large shoal on the east side of the main entrance to Galveston Bay. On this shoal there was not more than from two to three feet of water, and the breakers broke furiously over it; and between the channel and the shore there was a considerable stretch of shallow water. We had learned from the troopers that the Federals had lately stationed a gunboat on the east side of this shoal. I knew, however, that a gunboat would not venture to anchor in less than 3½ fathoms of water, so that there would be room to pass, if we could do so, unobserved.

As we had plenty of time I decided to put the vessel under low canvas, so that nothing would show above the dark loom of the land to leeward.

We accordingly put double reefs in the mainsail and foresail, and proceeded very cautiously, keeping the lead going.

We soon began to hear the distant roar of the breakers on the shoal, and very soon after, I could, with the glass, clearly make out a vessel at anchor on our port bow, and pretty close in to the shore, so that it would be close work to get past unobserved. Keep her away a little. She was kept away until the water shoaled to ten feet, and then brought up and kept in that depth. The dim lines of the gunboat were now abeam, and if we could only get water sufficient we should get past. The water now shoaled to eight feet, but that was what I expected. We had now got past the gunboat, but the water suddenly shoaled down to six feet, and then to five. This would

not do; we luffed up; it deepened a little, and then shoaled down to five feet again. We came round on the other tack, but still found little more than five feet.

The roaring of the breakers was heard all around, and I expected every moment the vessel would take the ground. There was not a moment to lose; the vessel was luffed up into the wind with sails shaking. I feared to drop anchor lest the noise of the chain running out might be heard on board of the gunboat, and tried to throw out the grapnel.

"It will never hold her," said the mate.

"Never mind, it will check her a little till we see what is to be done."

The grapnel was thrown out and the sails lowered.

With my glass I could see that we had got well past one gunboat; but we could see another over the breakers to the south-west.

The man with the lead said the vessel was drifting, and there was a strong current.

"Better let go the anchor," said the mate, "or we will be on the breakers."

The anchor was hanging at the davits, but I feared the noice of the chain running out.

"Ease gently about three fathoms of chain out of the hawse hole," said I, "and then let go."

This was done, and the anchor dropped without noise.

"We have got into a fix," was the word; "but there is certainly a channel if we know where to find it; let us get out the boat and go and take soundings."

The boat was got out, and I took two men in her, and, taking the hand-lead, began to sound all round the vessel. A compass in the boat would have been of no use as we could not use a light, so we must calculate the bearings by that most invaluable guide, the North Star.

It was sometime before we got a passage away from the vessel, but at last, by passing through about six feet of water, back nearly in the direction we had come, we found a channel of seven feet, which we followed as far as we could without losing sight of the schooner, and found it to lead about W.S.W. This exactly agreed with the directions given by

Captain M., and we returned to the schooner marking well the course we must take.

When we got back to the schooner I was annoyed to find that the men in letting go the anchor had omitted to take a turn of the chain round the bitts, and the vessel had drifted out about twenty fathoms of chain before they discovered their mistake, and all this was now to heave up. Of course I swore at their stupidity, but it was not to be expected that they would have all their wits about them in a time of excitement.

While they heaved in the chain I studied the position and saw how we had got into this fix. By keeping away to avoid the gunboat, we had gone out of the course, and been led into a sort of *cul de sac*, and it was fortunate that we did not ground on the shoal.

The difficulty was now to get out of this, and get into the channel, the distance would be only 150 yards, but from the direction of the wind she would not lay the course, and there was no room to tack or water sufficient to use the centre-board, besides a strong current against us.

We attached a good heavy piece of chain to the grapnel, which we carried out with the boat, and by using the sweeps to lessen the strain, we after a good deal of hard work succeeded in warping up.

Having got into the channel we hoisted sail again, and followed the channel very cautiously, as the channel was narrow and required very careful steering to keep in seven feet of water, and the slightest deviation would have been fatal to us.

We were now safely past one gunboat, but we could see another some distance ahead on the port bow; but as she could not be in shallow water, there must be a turn off in the channel before we got near her.

Suddenly the man with the lead called out sharply, "Nine feet! thirteen feet! Hard up! ease off sheets and keep her away to north-west."

We were now into the main channel, standing up before the wind with the last seen gunboat nearly astern, when suddenly a light flashed on our port bow, and we were hailed, "Schooner ahoy! heave to quick or we will sink you."

I scarcely knew what to do. I thought it must be an armed boat from the blockading fleet.

"No ship's boat comes in that far," said one of the men.

"Who are you?" I cried.

"Confederate guard boat," was the reply. "What vessel is that?"

"The schooner *Rob Roy* from Havana," I replied.

"All right; but heave to quick or you are sunk."

Our helm was put hard down, but being before the wind with our sheets eased off, we took a pretty large sweep in coming round and before we could get the sheets aboard, we had almost run into the guard-boat. It was one of the harbour steamers fitted up for the purpose, and so close did we come that a man on the upper deck of the steamer caught the end of our jib-boom just as we had lost headway, and with the help of our men pushed the two vessels apart.

Explanations then followed.

"Why did you threaten to sink us?"

"To make you heave to quick as you were running upon certain destruction."

"Why? are there torpedoes in the channel."

"Well, perhaps there are, but you were running right on to the wreck of the *Westfield*, and if you had struck that, you would have gone down right fast. Drop a little way astern and let go your anchor until daylight. It is here the boarding officer will visit you before you go up to town."

We dropped astern and let go the anchor. Every one breathed freely, and the general expression was, "In all right at last."

It was now past four o'clock. I told the men all to go and turn in, but, fatigued as they must have been, they seemed too happy and exhilarated to care about sleep.

In a short time a boat from the guard ship came alongside.

"May we come on board," said the officer.

"You know your port regulations best," said I, "but we have no sickness on board. Is the health officer with you?"

"No, he won't be down till daylight, and I think we had better not go on board until he comes."

"*Will* you take something now?" said I.

"Well, it's early."

With that the cook came up and said he had coffee ready.

"Will you take a mug of hot coffee?" said I.

"Rather than all the grog in the world," they said.

Coffee was brought and handed to them in the boat, which they enjoyed as a great luxury, not having, as they said, tasted any for months.

"So you are the *Rob Roy*, in all right. We heard you had been captured."

"Well, we have had some narrow escapes; we have had a long passage of eighteen days, light winds and dodging the cruisers. Has any of the other vessels got in? There was several vessels left Havana at the same time with us."

"Captain McLusky is in three days ago; he has got into the Brazos River, and brought a Yankee officer and crew along with him."

"What do you say?" said I.

"He is in the Brazos River, and has brought in with him as prisoners an officer and five men from a Yankee gunboat."

"The devil is in that man," said I; "he left Havana on the same night as I did upon an old flat-bottomed barge that I could scarcely believed would cross the Gulf, but how about the prize crew?"

"He was captured, and recaptured his vessel again. I believe there was some fighting, but I have not heard the particulars."

"Has any other vessel arrived? has any got into Galveston?"

"No; you are the first that has come in here for several months."

When I told the officer that we had arms for the Government, he said that was important, as he knew the Government was much in want of them; he would, therefore, telegraph to the city, so that there might be no delay, and so saying, they left and returned to the guard ship.

About daylight a boat came alongside with the health officer and other port officials. The despatches had already been delivered by Major —— of De Bray's regiment; and they had orders to board the *Rob Roy* immediately on her arrival and

give her quick despatch, and also to inform the captain that General Magruder would be glad to see him at headquarters as soon as possible.

The boarding ceremonies were soon gone through, and I invited them to take breakfast with us. This invitation they very willingly accepted, and enjoyed much such things as we had on the table, which had become almost unknown in Texas owing to the blockade, especially some pickled mackerel, which they said the General would have enjoyed much, as he was very partial to it; the health officer remarking at the same time that he was caterer for the General's mess, and he had much difficulty in procuring such things as the old man liked, as they were now getting very scarce. Of course I took the hint.

I said if they would give me a passage up to town in their boat, I would go up and see the General as he desired, and take the ship's papers and enter the manifesto at the custom house; and as there was no pilots and some dangerous obstructions in the way, I would mark them and return and take up the vessel. This they readily agreed to do.

I then put into the doctor's boat a few things, such as some tea and coffee, two small cheeses, three kits of mackerel, a barrel of potatoes, a box of raisins, and some other small articles; also half-a-dozen bottles of brandy, a case of gin, and a dozen bottles of port. The liquor, of course, being a donation for the hospital.

I then gave orders to the mate to remain at anchor until I returned, and have everything ready to run the vessel up to town.

I took a look at the position of the blockading fleet and the narrow channel through which we had passed in coming in, and I resolved, if possible, to make a thorough survey of the small channels before we sailed. We then got into the boat and started up the bay towards the town of Galveston.

My attention was first directed to the wreck of the *Westfield*, a formidable looking pile of iron boilers and machinery sticking out of the water, which marked the spot where this ill-fated vessel came to her tragical end with some of her officers and crew a short time previously.

The *Westfield* was one of the war ships which lay at Galveston after that place was captured by the Federals in 1862, and this is the story that I heard of how she came to be a wreck on that shoal.

When the attack was made on Galveston by the Confederate forces under General Magruder, on the morning of the 1st of January, 1863, the Federal forces after a desperate battle on land and water were overpowered, and the place was retaken by the Confederates, and most of the war ships and vessels in the harbour fell into the hands of the latter. The Commodore, however, tried to escape to sea with the *Westfield*, but in the attempt he grounded on a shoal and stuck fast. Seeing that he was going to be attacked by the Confederates with their land batteries, he determined to escape in his boats, and blow up the ship to prevent her falling into the hands of the enemy. He accordingly laid a train to the magazine, but, by some mismanagement or accident, the train was fired prematurely and the Commodore and a large portion of his crew were blown up with the ship.

It was straight on to this wreck that the *Rob Roy* was running in the dark morning when ordered by the officer of the guard ship to heave to. Several other dangerous obstructions were pointed out to me, which had been placed in the way as traps for a hostile fleet.

We reached the town about 8 a.m. I went first to the British Consulate, but as it was not yet business hours, I merely reported arrival and left my papers.

I then proceeded to General Magruder's headquarters. The General was not yet dressed, but I was told to go up to his room.

General Magruder, who had a slight lisp or stutter in his speech, was swearing at one of his boots which he could not get on comfortably, on account of corns on his toes.

He was, however, in very good humour, and I saw that the few things I had brought from the vessel had arrived before me.

In the room with him was an aide-de-camp, and lying around in order were numerous papers, I suppose part of the packet I had brought.

The aide-de-camp had opened one of the bottles of gin, and was preparing something which was known at that time by the name of "Gin cocktail." He cast his eye towards me in a laughing way and by way of acknowledgment said—

"This is some of your importations, Captain."

I knew there was a penalty for bringing in spirituous liquors, and it was declared contraband, and I replied that it was part of my ship stores, which I had sent ashore as a donation to the hospital, and I hoped in doing so I had committed no breach of law or regulations.

"Oh, no," was the reply, "when it is understood to be for the use of the medical department; and the gift was a very valuable one and was greatly appreciated;" and he added, with a smile, "that both he and the General were on the sick list at present."

Having taken their cocktails, the General got his boot on all right, and the cocktail seemed to have quite allayed the pain of the corns. He then congratulated me on my safe arrival and having looked over the list of the cargo, he said it was a most valuable cargo and came most opportune, and he would like to get the arms delivered as soon as possible.

I said I found that the seat of customs was at Houston, and I would require to enter the manifesto there; but to take the vessel up Buffalo Bayou would take two or three days unless I got a tow up.

"Oh," said he, "we have plenty of steamers here, and will order one to tow you up."

"Major," said he to the aide-de-camp, "you had better write an order for that at once. Write an order of instruction to Captain W. about the arms, and then give orders to the Marine Department to get a steamer ready to tow the vessel up to Houston."

The following order was then written out and handed to me, from which I now copy verbatim:—

"HEADQUARTERS, DISTRICT TEXAS, GALVESTON,
June 2nd, 1864.

"CAPTAIN W., Schooner *Rob Roy*.

"*CAPTAIN*,—I am directed by the Major General com^{d}

to say that you will take your vessel to Houston, and in the absence of the officer designated by General Smith, you will deliver the arms forwarded by Mr. Helm C. S. agent, to Captain Scott, ordnance officer at that place. Conforming of course to the revenue laws.

"I am, Captain,

"Your most obedient servant,

"WM. S. CARRINGTON,

"*A.A.A.G.*

"You will hand the invoice to Captain Scott, ordnance officer."

Having got through the business, the General asked me to stay to breakfast. I said I had breakfasted long ago, and would now go and get the vessel brought up to the vicinity of the harbour, where she would be handy for the steamer to take her in tow.

Breakfast was now being put on the table, and the health officer had come in.

"I think," said the General, "that I smell 'coffee sure enough,' as the negroes say.* Has the doctor been on board of the *Rob Roy*?"

"Of course," said the doctor, "that is my duty, and the captain has been very kind."

I now took my leave and got a harbour boat to take me to the vessel, which I reached about ten o'clock, and a light breeze having sprung up we got up anchor and soon got up to the harbour, and anchored near to a steamer named the *Island City*, which was the one spoken of by the General as the one that would be ordered to tow us up to Houston.

* The term "coffee sure enough" was a negro term at that time for genuine coffee. Coffee had been an article extensively used in the South, and the want of it was one of the greatest privations endured by the people in consequence of the blockade, and many substitutes for it had been tried in the shape of corn, beans, peas, and different kinds of seeds, roasted and ground, and served as a beverage at breakfast under the name of coffee, but none approached the genuine article; and it was a common expression among the negroes, if on some rare occasion such as the arrival of a blockade runner, they had got a taste of the genuine article, they would boast to their friends that they had tasted "coffee sure enough"—hence the phrase became a general one.

I went on board of the steamer to ascertain what time they would be ready to start. I was told, to my astonishment, that they had got no orders on the subject. They expected that they would be going up to Harrisonburg, but had got no orders about towing up the *Rob Roy*.

I scarcely understood why no orders had been given, and made inquiry at the Marine Department. I was met there by the usual shuffling, and referred by one to another, until at last I lost patience, and determined to go to the General himself.

I went to General Magruder's headquarters, but found he had gone out; supposed to be gone down to the Forts; would likely be back in about an hour.

On my way out I passed the door of another room, where a number of people were assembled, mostly females and children, on whose garments and general appearance could well be seen the effects of the blockade; many of them held plates in their hands.

As I walked slowly past a voice from within the room cried, "Hulloa, Captain." I looked in and saw the health officer, who was also doctor of the General's staff. He was busy dealing out among these people a small share of the few things I had given him. To some he laid two mackerel on their plate, to others a bit of cheese or a little coffee or tea, to the children some raisins, &c. On my making a remark the doctor said, "The General would divide his last crust with these poor people, and poor enough they are here now."

I said that caused me to form a very different opinion of the General, as I had heard that he was rather selfish and tyrannical.

He replied that the General might have his faults, as all men had, but he took no care to hide his faults or court adulation, and he cared not what any one said about him. He followed his own course and turned to the right or left for no one. At the same time this he could say of him, that a kinder-hearted man was not in existence.

It was now about one o'clock, and I went out and was wandering slowly along the front street, when a phaeton came driving along, and in it I saw the General and another officer *sitting*.

The General observed me, and, stopping the machine, cried out, "Have you not got away yet, Captain?"

I said, "No, there was no wind, and I saw no chance of being towed up."

"How is that?" said he.

I said the officers seemed not to understand each other in the matter; one had no orders, others had no authority to give orders, and I had been banded about from one to another.

"Confound them all," the General stuttered out angrily; and, looking to the right and left, said, "Have you a bit of paper and a pencil?"

I took out the order I had received in the morning.

"That will do," he said, and I handed it to him with a pencil, and he wrote something on the back with the pencil and handed it to me, saying, "Take that to the Marine Department."

This paper has been lying tied up in a bundle with others for over twenty-five years, and though not very legibly written, I can now copy from it the writing in pencil verbatim, as follows:—

"It is of importance to give despatch to blockade runners. General Haines has got the transport steamers. He will give orders for their captains to afford the *Rob Roy* any assistance they can which will not interfere materially with the public service. General Haines cannot be at a loss to give the proper orders, as he is supposed to know and can ascertain what assistance can be given; for instance, if the *Island City* goes to ——, or proceeds to Houston, if not —— she could take her up on the way; if not needed here she could be sent on purpose, as the *Rob Roy* has a valuable cargo of arms that ought to be delivered without delay.

"&c., &c.,

"J. B. MAGRUDER."

The blanks in the above are words which I cannot now make out. He handed this to me, saying, "Take this to the Marine Department." I went at once to the Marine Department, asked for the chief officer, and handed him the order.

He did not observe the pencil writing, but opened the paper and read the order.

"Well," said he, "this is an order for you to take your vessel to Houston and deliver the arms, &c. Why don't you do so? What have I to do with that?"

"It is in regard to being towed up," said I. "I understood that orders were given to you on the subject, and I called to see about it this forenoon, but got no satisfaction. Please read the pencil writing on the back, that will explain it better to you."

He turned it over and began to read the pencil writing on the back, which was not very plain.

"What is this?" said he. "Whose writing is that?"

"General Magruder wrote that," said I, "a few minutes ago, after passing one or two compliments at the management of the Marine Department."

He turned it over, looked at the signature, and then began to read it carefully with changed countenance.

"Can't you read it, Major," said one or two of the officers round him, referring to the General's handwriting.

The Major read it carefully over, and immediately taking a pen endorsed on it:—

"GALVESTON, *June 2nd*, 1864.

"The *Island City* will be ordered to take the *Rob Roy* in tow for Harrisonburg as she goes up.

"ROBERT WAGAN,
"Major and Chief Marine, 1st D.S."

I merely mention these little incidents to show the attitude so often displayed by subordinates in office.

The *Island City*, which had steam up, was alongside of the *Rob Roy* almost as soon as I could get on board, and very soon we were crossing Galveston Bay in tow of this steamer.

Having seen and experienced some of the damage done to sailing vessels on the Brazos River by the carelessness of steamers while towing, I reminded the captain of the valuable cargo of arms and ammunition that was on board, and which *would be* destroyed if the vessel was sunk or damaged.

He said he would be careful, and as it would be dark by the time we reached Buffalo Bayou, he intended to stop and take on wood at a place near the mouth of the Bayou, where we would lay up for the night, and proceed up the narrow Bayou in daylight; but he said he could only tow us to Harrisonburg. I said we could easily manage up the rest of the way ourselves.

All went well. We entered the Bayou and lay all night at a wood-yard, where I may safely say we had all a sweet night's sleep, which we stood greatly in need of, being the first we had had for some time.

In the morning the steamer took us in tow again, and towed us up as far as Harrisonburg, where she dropped us, and we worked up to Houston by the oars, where we arrived on the 3rd of June, 1864.

Mr. M. was at the wharf to receive us, and of course there were a great many congratulations on our safe arrival, as it was feared, and it was afterwards confirmed, that the *Sylvia*, the *Emily*, and another vessel, I think named the *Lily*, all of which had left Havana about the same time with us, had been captured.

The Messrs. M. were appointed consignees, with instructions to sell the cargo and invest the proceeds in cotton; it being understood that what part of it that was sold to the Government would be paid for in cotton bonds.

The usual forms at the custom house were again gone through, and soon our cargo of arms, ammunition, and other war stores were landed, and sent off to do what good or evil they might.

I found that at the time the large cotton press was stopped, undergoing repairs, and if I wished to have the cotton bales compressed I should require to wait for some time.

As this was very important for stowage I preferred to wait. I was in no hurry, as I certainly did not wish to go to sea again at this season, as there was great danger of capture on account of the calms, or light winds and long daylight, and I did not desire to sail before the end of August, when there was a better chance of a steady wind.

CHAPTER XIII.

Captain Dave makes a demand upon me—How his vessel was captured—How he re-captured her—A flag of truce—Dave has a parley with the commander of the blockading fleet.

ALMOST immediately after we got up to Houston I had a visit from my friend Captain Dave McLusky.

"Captain," said he, in his usual jocular way, "I have come to claim that dozen of brandy from you; you see I got in before you."

"What do you mean?" said I; "I did not make any bet with you."

"I know you did not," said he; "but you will give it to me all the same, because I have lost all mine. I also want you to give me another of your *cartes*, I have lost the one you gave me, as well as that of Captain Moore. They have, with all my clothes, liquors, and other valuables, fallen into the hands of the Yankees."

"How did that happen," said I. "I have never had the full account of your capture and your re-capture of the vessel."

He then related to me the whole affair, and as I had accounts of it from others, both from his men, and from the officer and men whom he overpowered and brought in prisoners, I am able to relate the affair true as it happened.

Captain Dave had no pretensions to being a high-class navigator. He had a good practical knowledge, and could get his latitude from a meridian altitude, but he did not carry a chronometer, but worked up his longitude and position from dead reckoning.

His usual way on the passage from Havana was to stand west to the Yucatan Banks, and there find his position by soundings; then set his course northwards for a port in Texas, finding his distance by latitude as he went on.

In this case, the winds being light and easterly, he did not make sufficient allowance for the leeway his flat, box-shaped vessel was certain to make. The consequence was that,

instead of striking St. Louis Pass, he made a landfall about ten miles to the westward of the Brazos River.

He was then standing to the eastward with a southerly breeze, when a gunboat hove in sight and bore down upon him.

On seeing the gunboat Dave put his vessel before the wind, took up his centre-board, and made for the Texas coast, which was direct under his lee, intending to run his vessel on the beach. It was too late, however, the gunboat was up and boarded him before he got within ten miles of the beach. Of course there was no attempt at excuse, and he was made a prize.

The captain of the gunboat let Dave and his crew remain on board their vessel, but put on board an officer and six men, with orders to bring the vessel along and follow the steamer to Galveston.

Dave and his crew began to pack up their effects, while the lieutenant and his men took charge of the vessel.

Dave soon observed that the officer, in bringing the vessel up on the wind, did not put down the centre-board, and in all probability he had never seen a vessel of that kind, nor knew that the vessel possessed such a thing, and Dave thought it was no part of his duty to instruct him in the use of it.

Dave knew, however, that those prize crews were generally very fond of rum, and also that as soon as they were put on board a captured vessel, they generally found means to penetrate her hold and ransack it, to see if there was anything which they might appropriate to their own use.

To meet their wants in both cases, Dave took care to leave a jar of rum on the top of the cargo in the hold, and as the bulkhead between the hold and forecastle was of no great strength, it would be no great deterrent to men in search of plunder.

Dave and his crew, having bundled up their effects, sat down under the gunwale as if resigned to their fate, feigning as if glad to get a little rest, and soon went apparently to sleep, but it is an old saying that men are not always sleeping when they are nodding.

Dave and his mate and crew, emboldened by their last adventure, had determined to take advantage of any chance that offered to recapture their vessel.

They quietly watched the working of the vessel by the lieutenant and his crew.

The men were armed with cutlasses, and the lieutenant carried in his belt a revolver. The men while at work stuck their cutlasses in the belaying rack at the mainmast.

On seeing the vessel making so much leeway, the lieutenant never thinking of such a thing as a centre-board, kept ordering to luff and haul aft the sheets. This, however, only checked her speed, and she soon fell to leeward.

At the same time Dave began to perceive that the men were running up and down to the forecastle very often, and he guessed what the attraction was; and it was not long before the unsteady tread of the men on deck showed plainly that they had broke through into the hold and had discovered the jar, and were making free with its contents.

The vessel had got nearly abreast of Brazos River, but by the amount of leeway she was making she was not more than six miles from the shore, and it so happened that there was no blockading vessel lying there at the time.

Some of the lieutenant's men were now pretty reasonably drunk. The gunboat was a long way ahead. The lieutenant was getting uneasy, and was looking after her as if he would signal, when Dave, making a signal to his men, he himself sprang upon the lieutenant, pinned his hands to his sides, and got hold of his revolver, while his mate, with the rest of his crew, sprang upon the prize crew, got hold of some of their cutlasses; others seized handspikes, and a desperate fight took place. While Dave was struggling with the lieutenant, one of the prize crew, who was a negro, drew a knife, and rushed up to stab Dave in the back; but just as he raised his hand for the blow he was felled to the deck with a handspike by the mate. The struggle lasted for some time, but the prize crew were overpowered, some badly wounded, but none killed.

The lieutenant struggled hard, but Dave held him down on the deck, while he threatened Dave with the awful consequences of the act. In the meantime some of Dave's men had put the helm hard up, and eased off the sheets, and the vessel *was put before* the wind, heading for the shore. Suddenly a

gun was heard from the cruiser, which signified that she had observed that something was wrong.

"Do you hear that?" cried the lieutenant, who was fairly overpowered. "For God's sake heave to, or the captain will sink you."

"Let him fire away," said Dave; "he is there, and I am here."

The change in the vessel's course had been observed from the cruiser, and as she was now off before the wind, heading towards the shore, they knew something must be wrong, and they had put about, and was bearing down upon her. They were, however, about four miles' distant, and the schooner was before the wind, heading direct for the Forts at the mouth of the Brazos River, now about five miles' distant.

Unfortunately now for Dave the wind began to die away, and it was questionable whether they could make the shoal water, and get under cover of the Forts before the cruiser would be upon them. The wind got less and less, and then, as Dave said, what would he not have given for the sweeps which he had laughed at me for taking with me from Havana.

Dave now began to fear much that he was going to be taken again by the cruiser, and, if so, it would likely be hard with him. He therefore determined to escape in the boat, which he got quickly out, and put into it his chest and all his valuables, not forgetting his boxes of brandy. He kept the boat towing astern, to be ready to jump into at the last moment.

Just then, however, the breeze freshened up a little, and the schooner moved along faster, but they expected every moment that the cruiser would open fire upon them, which she did, but the shot fell short.

The breeze continued to freshen, and there was again a good chance of getting out of reach of the cruiser, when the negro, who had attempted to stab Dave, thinking perhaps that if carried into the Confederacy his fate might be hard, watched his opportunity, and jumped into the boat which was towing astern and cut the tow rope. He knew that the schooner could not lose the time to turn round and pick him up, while the cruiser would be certain to pick up the boat. Dave was so exasperated at seeing his chest, his liquors, and all his valu-

ables so adroitly taken away by the negro that he fired every shot from the lieutenant's revolver at him. Mr. Negro crouched down in the bottom of the boat, and whether he was hit or not Dave did not know.

The breeze continued, and the schooner got under the cover of the Confederate Forts at the mouth of the river. The cruiser picked up the boat, but did not come within reach of the guns of the Forts.

Dave got in over the bar, and reported to the commander at the Forts, saying, "I brought you only two men last time, but I have brought you a whole prize crew and an officer this time."

The prize crew and officer brought in by Dave being now declared lawful prisoners of war were detained. Such as were wounded were sent to the hospital till recovered. The officer was sent to board at one of the hotels in Houston, with orders to report at the Marine Department every day. I saw him very often; he sometimes came on board of the *Rob Roy*; he wished to get something to read. He got some paper-backed novels which were lying about; he said they would help him to pass the time. He seemed to feel his position very much, was very reserved in referring to the matter. He seemed, so far as he cared to express himself, to blame the captain of the cruiser for leaving the schooner so far astern. Of course the captain of the cruiser, having only seen the schooner from a distance, had no idea of what an unmanageable thing she was. He allowed that if he had been in Captain McLusky's place he would very probably have done just as he did.

A few days after the prisoners had been brought to Houston, both officers and men found that they were without a change of clothing, and as the Confederacy was not a place where these wants could be very easily supplied, the lieutenant made a request that General Magruder would communicate with the commander of the fleet at Galveston, and deliver a message from him, requesting that his clothes and those of the men might be sent ashore to them.

The General agreed to this, and directed that a boat with a *flag of truce* should be sent off to the fleet. On learning

this, Dave applied to General Magruder for permission to go in the truce-boat, to try if he could persuade the commander of the fleet to return to him his chest and effects. The General at first tried to dissuade him, but afterwards consented to let him go.

The truce-boat, after being met about midway by a boat from the fleet, was taken alongside of the Commodore's ship.

The commander of the fleet, who had had the whole story from the negro who had escaped in the boat, was greatly irritated at the event. He agreed to send the lieutenant's clothes, but would not allow those of the men to be sent, as a punishment to them for getting drunk.

Dave now represented his case to the commander, and humbly requested that his effects might be returned to him, adding, by way of giving effect to his appeal, that such humble toggery could be of no use to men of such high standing and position as United States naval officers.

The commander, on ascertaining who he was, was enraged at his audacity; said he would return none of his effects; told him he had been guilty of piracy, and if he fell into the hands of the United States authorities he would be tried and hanged for piracy. But Dave was a character, and the commander's threats were lost upon him.

"Oh! now, Captain," said Dave, "don't put yourself in a passion. Don't you know that I hold a commission in the Confederate States Navy? And if you don't respect that now, you did, not very long ago, when you made a truce here one morning" (referring to the defeat of the Federals at Galveston on the morning of January 1, 1863). "Therefore what I did was not piracy, but a lawful act of war; and you know I was very good to your men."

"A little too good, confound you," said the commander, "to fill them drunk."

"Oh! no, Captain," said Dave, "that is not true. I never offered them drink; they broke through into the hold and stole it; and you know, Captain, when thieves break through and steal they are always sure to be punished. Such are the ways of Providence, you know. And another thing let me tell you, Captain. That black nigger of yours, who ran away with

the boat, and my things in it, and who has told you the whole story about the men getting drunk, he will, no doubt, be lionized by the Abolitionists, and placed on the list for promotion. But I doubt much if he has told you that he was the cause of the men getting drunk, and the whole trouble that followed."

"How do you make that out?" said the commander. "He did not drink; he was quite sober."

"No," said Dave, "but he was the one that first set about plundering. It was him that broke down the bulkhead between the forecastle and the hold, and went into the hold to see what he could steal. The men, seeing the bulkhead broken down, went into the hold and discovered the jar of rum, and that was the cause of them getting drunk. So thank your nigger for the whole affair, and don't accuse me of piracy or of filling your men drunk."

"What is your authority for that statement?" said the commander.

"One of my men was down in the forecastle getting out his clothes, and saw the nigger breaking down the bulkhead; and, furthermore, every one of your own men are ready to swear to it as soon as they are exchanged."

The commander stood silent for a few minutes, and Dave continued:

"So now, I think, for that bit of information you might give me back my things. I think I have as good a right to them as the nigger, who will, no doubt, be expecting to get them for his honesty."

"I won't deliver anything to you," said the commander. "That story of yours may be inquired into, but I don't believe a word of it."

"Will you not give me back one of my boxes of brandy? I am sure that neither you nor any of your officers have any use for such a thing," said Dave, with a smile of ironical simplicity.

The commander scowled, but made no reply.

"If you do," continued Dave, "I will give half of it to the poor lieutenant, as I know he cannot get a drop on shore."

"He doesn't want it; he doesn't require it," roared the commander. "Confound you, and your liquor; it has done

too much harm already." And the commander turned away.

The boat was still waiting for the lieutenant's chest, which was being packed up, when another officer, who had been standing by while Dave was reasoning with the commander, and who, Dave thought, seemed rather to enjoy the story of the negro breaking into the hold of the prize vessel, came and talked over the side to Dave in a sort of bantering way.

Dave still asked about his chest—if it was on the commodore's ship, and if they had opened it. The officer said the chest was on board their ship, and that they had opened it and taken a note of the contents.

"Then," said Dave, "I am sure you would not find anything that would be of any value to you, or afford you any information whatever."

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said the officer; "we have got some valuable information. We have got your carte, and also the figure-heads of some of your blockade-running friends, so that we will be able to identify them when we come across them."

"Oh, you ought not to keep them," said Dave; "they don't belong to me, and these gentlemen will be annoyed."

"Oh, tell them to make themselves easy," returned the officer. "We will be very glad to recognize both you and them when we get hold of either of you, and these cartes will greatly assist us in tracing you. In the meantime you can inform Captain M. and Captain W. that their cartes, along with yours, will be honoured with a place in the 'Rogues' Gallery' in New York."

The lieutenant's things were now in the boat, and she shoved off. When at a certain distance from the fleet the white flags on the boat and on the ships were hauled down, and the truce was ended. Soon after, Dave came laughing to tell me about the honourable place where my carte was to be hung up.

Notwithstanding the danger of the undertaking, Dave determined to bring his vessel, which was lying in Brazos River, through to Galveston by way of St. Louis Pass. To do this it would be necessary to come out of the Brazos River into the

open sea, and run along the coast about eight miles and enter the pass. He chose night to make the run, and succeeded in entering the pass before daylight; but he was still about twenty miles from Galveston, up a narrow channel, with nothing but a low, sandy point betwixt it and the sea. Over this the vessel could be easily seen from seawards, and the cruisers, recognizing the hated craft which had brought a disgrace upon them, displayed their revenge by opening fire upon her, which they continued the whole day as the vessel worked her way up the narrow channel.

I was watching the proceedings, and I am certain that one half of the shot which was fired at her, had it been put into her hold, would have sunk her by its weight. But as the land lay between the vessel and the sea her hull could not be seen, but only her masts, and she was not easy to hit, and not many of the shots took effect. Nevertheless, from such a prolonged firing she was considerably cut up, and I thought she could never be made fit to go to sea again. She was, however, sold and fitted up again, and took out a cargo of cotton to Tampico. I certainly should not have liked to have gone upon her.

It was now about the middle of June, and I had nothing before me but to remain idle for about two months. The weather was intensely hot, and there was not a breath of wind. The vessel, however, lay in fresh water, where her bottom would not get damaged by sea-worms, which are so destructive in these seas to the bottoms of vessels which are not sheathed.

One of the first things I did after discharging was to have the vessel careened and scraped down as far as possible, but owing to the flat model of the vessel and her extraordinary stability it was impossible to careen her very far. The men were employed in overhauling the rigging, and doing any necessary repairs, and putting everything in good order, but there was much time to spare. I spent some of the time in looking around the country, of which I do not mean here to give a description.

During the time we lay, one or two schooners got into *Galveston* Bay, but several others were captured in making

the attempt. The first that got in was the *Mary Elizabeth*, Captain Shaeffer, who had sailed with us out of the Brazos River last trip, but he had not been to Havana, but came from Vera Cruz, and got in by St. Louis Pass. Two steamers also got in during that time—about the first arrivals of steamers in Galveston. Another steamer had attempted, but was captured.

CHAPTER XIV.

Loading of the vessel—Yellow fever—Clearance and letter of consignment—Captain Shaeffer and the *Mary Elizabeth*—Cruising in Galveston Bay—Novel method of cleaning a vessel's bottom—An extraordinary statement of accounts—No pass out till settled—A blockade on both sides to run—Father Ryan a passenger.

AT length the cotton press was in working order, and we began to get our cargo on board.

I determined to have no stevedore. On last trip the first had by over-screwing forced up the deck, started a leak, and sunk the vessel; and the second, from lack of screwing, had left the deck unsupported, causing the vessel to leak by the working of the deck from the weight of the deck-load.

I therefore determined to stow the vessel myself with my own crew, three of whom were very well used to that kind of work; and one in particular—an Irishman—whom I had shipped at Havana—an old, quiet sort of man—was a first-class stevedore, in fact, the best I ever saw. Why this man had not made a fortune at this business was what I wondered at. I afterwards learned the cause. The old weakness—drink.

This man worked hard, and showed such good judgment in stowing, that a much greater quantity of cotton was stowed into the hold than ever had been before, without the vessel being strained in any way.

I was so well pleased with the way in which this man had worked, and he was such a quiet, contented old fellow, that I resolved to pay him a gratuity if we succeeded in making the trip safe.

Towards the end of July, yellow fever broke out in Galveston, supposed to have been brought in by one of the steamers from Havana. It soon reached Houston, and one of my men was seized with it. Most of us having already had the disease, and knowing well the treatment, we soon got him well again.

At this time the schooner, *Mary Elizabeth* (Captain Shaeffer), which had sailed out of the Brazos River with us on the former trip, was lying alongside of us, and had completed loading.

Captain Shaeffer said to me that in order to be out of the way of yellow fever, he intended to move down to Galveston Bay, and cruise about there till a good chance offered of going to sea, and he asked me if I would complete my loading—by getting on my deck-load—and go down also.

I objected, and said that by going into the salt water the vessel's bottom would get foul before we might get a chance of getting to sea.

He said one of his chief objects in going down there was to clean his vessel's bottom by hauling her over the soft shoals of shells and gravel.

I thought this rather an odd way of cleaning a vessel's bottom, but I knew it was often done in these parts; and I agreed to go if he would wait until I got on my deck-load, and got my clearance.

He said he would wait, as he wished to sail on the same night with me, as he had done on last voyage, and had good luck, and he predicted the same luck again. Poor fellow, I wish his predictions had been verified.

Captain George Shaeffer was a native of Texas, and a brother of Captain H. Shaeffer, whom I had met at Matamoras. He was quite a young man, remarkably steady in his habits, and of a kind and genial disposition. He had been employed all his life in small schooners on the Texas coast, and knew well his business. He had been married since he came in from last trip, and was in hopes that another successful voyage would give him a fair start in life.

After some little delay I got the deck-load on board, and properly secured, and all ready for sea. I got the bills of lading endorsed, and the cargo consigned to master, with an

open letter from Messrs. R. and D. G. M., which read as follows:—

"HOUSTON, *August* 6, 1864.

"*To Messrs.* ——, *Tampico, or Messrs.* ——, *Vera Cruz.*

"This will be handed to you by Captain W., of the *Rob Roy*, who takes out a cargo of 198 bales of cotton, one half of which belongs to us. Our moiety you will ship to Messrs. ——, Liverpool, advising them to cover same with their open policy of insurance.

"R. and D. G. M."

I then got a clearance at the custom house. The Consular clearance and ship's papers I would get at the Consulate at Galveston, where I would also get a passport to pass the Forts out to sea.

Just as we were about to leave Houston one of my crew—Jim Hyland, the stevedore—was seized with yellow fever.

As we were now fully loaded, and had no accommodation for him on board, I got him sent ashore to the hospital, where I knew he would be well treated. His kit was sent with him, and some money to bring him on to the vessel as soon as he recovered.

The two vessels, the *Rob Roy* and the *Mary Elizabeth*, now dropped leisurely down Buffalo Bayou, and soon were in the open Bay of Galveston, where we spent the time in cruising about very much like exercising and amusement.

Captain S. knew every shoal, channel, nook, and corner in Galveston Bay, which is extensive, so that in some parts land is entirely lost sight of. There was many level sandy spots where we ran the vessel aground at high water, and lay over a tide, and the weather being hot, and the water clear and pleasant, the men rather enjoyed floundering in the water while cleaning the sides of the vessel, as far down as they could reach; but the vessel being now deep loaded, there was not sufficient rise and fall of the tide to enable us to get down to her keel, as we had done last trip on the Brazos River; but there were banks of sand and shells, on to which, when the tide was low, we ran the vessel with full force, as far as she

would penetrate into the soft sand and shells, and then, getting out a warp and with all sail set, warped her over the bank as the tide rose; this had an excellent effect in cleaning her bottom, and we found a marked difference in her sailing qualities.

The bay abounded with fish, and there were some fine oyster beds, and we often landed at the small farms on the shores, where we could buy poultry, sweet potatoes, and other farm produce cheap, and also get our water casks replenished.

While talking of sweet potatoes, I may remark that the common potato had entirely disappeared in Texas since the blockade. The cause of this was the want of seed potatoes, which required to be the growth of a cold country, and although excellent potatoes were raised in Texas, they would not do to replant for another crop, but the seed had always to be got from a northern climate. These farmers, therefore, urged upon me very strongly—if I came in again—to bring some Northern potatoes for seed.

This was one of the many little instances of every one having their wants, and the numerous little confidential messages I had from parties, both male and female, to bring in certain little things not now to be had in the country, brought to my mind a true realization of the effects of the blockade.

We passed several weeks in this bay, during which I went several times with a compass in the boat, and took soundings, and made a complete survey of the small channels which branched off from the main channel leading out to sea on the east and west, under the Forts, and between the shoals and the beach, and I fixed upon the west, or Swash Channel, as it was called, to go out by.

We occasionally touched at Galveston to get fresh beef, and also to hear the last news of the war, and get any letters or communications that might be there for us.

The two steamers lay there waiting for their cargoes of cotton being compressed and sent down from Houston. They were the first steamers which had run the blockade into Galveston, but as Mobile was now said to have been attacked, and nearly all of the other Confederate ports in the hands of

the Federals, it was supposed that the blockade-running steamers would now all try for Galveston.

I found at Galveston a letter from Mr. P., my partner's representative, who had come in with us, but did not intend to go out with us, and remained at Houston. He inquired about the disposition of the inward cargo, and said that from some transactions he was aware of, he feared the Messrs. M. were not acting fair with us.

I was quite aware that the cost of the cargo of cotton on the vessel did not amount to more than one-third of the proceeds of the inward cargo, but as we owned only one half of the vessel, and could get no more upon her, it was of little importance what was done with the surplus, as we could only get Confederate paper for it. I wrote to Mr. P. explaining this, but adding that he might see the Messrs. M. and get a statement of the proceeds of the inward cargo, and get what he could in the way of any cotton warrants which might fall to our share.

A few days afterwards I received from Messrs. M. the following letter:—

"HOUSTON, *August* 27, 1864.

"CAPTAIN W., *Rob Roy*,—We have just seen Major Rhetts, of the Ordnance Department, and he refuses to purchase the cavalry swords and the Belgium muskets, so we must hold them over until some other opportunity.

"On making up the accounts of the schooner, we find that if we charge to her all the cotton we have put on board she will owe us the sum of $5993\frac{80}{100}$ dollars specie. Now if you and the other owners will pay your proportion of this balance, the whole of the cotton can go out on the vessel's account, otherwise that amount should go out on our account, we paying a reasonable freight. We do not send you the account, as, until we know how you wish this matter settled, we cannot make it up to a point.

"Let us know by return mail, stating your views of the subject, and what you would consider a fair rate of freight for the cotton, which would go out on our account.

"R. and D. G. M."

It is an unpleasant thing to have to record in a narrative business controversies of a disagreeable nature, but as this incident caused a change in, and somewhat controlled, my after movements, I cannot avoid referring to it; besides, it was one of the many instances where advantage was taken of the desperate state of the times to make, or attempt to make, gain by whatever means it might be attained, without regard to honesty or principle.

I scarcely knew what to think of this letter. What they stated as a balance of $5993\frac{80}{100}$ dollars was just about the total value of the cotton they had put on board, without regard to the proceeds of the inward cargo.

What appeared to me most strange about it was, that they should bring up such a claim after everything had been adjusted a month previous, on the understanding that the cargo on board belonged one half to them and one half to us, and their endorsing the bills of lading consigned to master, and giving me a letter of consignment to that effect.

Not knowing very well what to do, I directed Mr. P. to consult with H., a prominent merchant in Houston and Galveston, who was some relation of my partner in Brownsville, and with whom Mr. P. was well acquainted.

Mr. H. did much business with the Quartermaster's Department, and most of the goods brought in by blockade runners and bought by that department passed through his hands, or were inspected and valued by him. He knew precisely what part of the inward cargo of the *Rob Roy* was purchased by that department, and the amount paid for it in cotton warrants.

Mr. H., having read the letter, said in a blunt way that the whole thing was a right down swindle—an attempt to get me to sign some document assigning over to them a further proportion of the vessel and cargo, and they expected that by intriguing at the Provost Marshal's Department the vessel would not be permitted to go to sea until I acceded to their terms. General Magruder not being now at Galveston, but gone to join General Kirby Smith in the field with his troops, corruption and speculation had become rife in the departments. He would advise me to go at once and apply for a pass to go to sea, and if it was refused, to appeal to General Magruder,

even if I went to the field to see him. He knew I stood in favour with the General, and he would see me righted.

I may here observe that most of the offices in the departments were filled by men who had formerly been planters, merchants, or men of business in the place, or members of firms still retaining an interest in the business, though, for the time being, holding an appointment which not only exempted them from service in the field, but also gave them power and opportunity to work matters for their own interests, which some of them did not fail to take advantage of.

I sent Messrs. R and D. G. no reply to their letter, and in a day or two afterwards their manager and book-keeper, Mr. R., came to see me.

This gentleman came on board with some hesitation, and seemed half ashamed of his mission. He said he had come to treat with me in regard to the subject which they had written to me about.

I said that before I could treat with him I must know if he understood the agreement between myself and Mr. R. M., made at Havana.

He said he did not know the particulars of it.

I then desired to know if he was conversant with the making up of the accounts of the schooner, as referred to in the letter, and if he considered them correct and honest.

He said that was not a question for him to answer, but suggested that I should come up to Houston and see the managing partner, Mr. J. M., on the subject, who was also the representative of Mr. R. M., of Havana.

I said I should not leave the vessel, but this was the answer he might take from me to Mr. J. M.:—

That he, as representative of Mr. R. M., must be aware that the conditions on which Mr. R. M. became half-owner of the vessel was, that he should put on board a cargo which he guaranteed to be more than sufficient to purchase a cargo of cotton in Texas, and pay all expenses thereon. If, therefore, the proceeds of that cargo turned out to be insufficient to purchase a cargo of cotton, then he, Mr. J. M., as representative of Mr. R. M., would understand that his part of the contract had not been fulfilled. Therefore the agreement would be

cancelled, and they would retain the whole of the inward cargo, and I would retain the whole of the vessel. I would charge them nothing for the freight of the cargo into Texas, and I would return the cotton which they had put on board.

I knew that at the time I could get a cargo of cotton to carry out bale for bale; that is, one half of the cargo for the freight.

Mr. R. looked rather abashed at this, and said he feared they would not accept it, as they did not wish to relinquish any part of their claim on the vessel.

He then asked if I had got a permission to pass the Forts out to sea.

I said I had not.

He said he expected that I would have to get that through Messrs. R. and D. G. M., and he thought I would do best to come up to Houston and see them and arrange the matter.

It was now my turn to be abashed. I saw my position and the trouble they might give me. However, I put a bold face on it, and said that I intended to get that by applying to General Magruder. In the meantime I had given him my answer to their letter, which he could lay before Mr. J. M., and I would await his reply. I did not, however, like the looks of matters, and I determined to try and get to sea if possible. It was now into September, and there was a chance of getting wind.

The man, Jim Hyland, whom I had left at Houston with yellow fever, sent word to say he was not able to join the vessel, but sent another man to take his place in case he did not get down before the vessel sailed.

I went to the British Consulate and got the vessel's papers and clearance from there, and applied at the Provost Marshal's Department for a permission to pass the Forts out to sea.

On giving my name, and the name of the vessel, I was told to come back in a few hours when somebody else was in.

When I called back and found this official, he asked me if I had brought a certificate from my consignees.

I said I did not know that such a thing was necessary. I had a certificate from the collector, and a regular clearance from the custom house at Houston, and I asked if a certificate

from the consignees was compulsory, as I had never heard of such a thing before.

He said it was not compulsory, but it was the general rule to prevent mistakes; but in any case, he said he could not give a passport at present, as no schooners were to be allowed to leave until a requisition had been made to take possession of some vessels to bring wood and water across the bay from the mainland to the town.

"But," said I, "you don't intend to press into service my vessel. She is all ready loaded and cleared for sea."

He said he did not know what vessels they would impress.

This seemed strange to me, as I knew that Captain Shaefler had got his passport on the previous day without any trouble.

"When will you let me know?" said I. "When will I call back?"

"In three or four days," said he; "and you had better bring with you a certificate from your consignees, it may save you some trouble."

I saw at once the truth of what Mr. H. had told me, and that the Messrs. M. had now some influence at the Provost Marshal's Department, and they meant to exercise it, and General Magruder was not now here for me to appeal to.

I said I would bring such certificate when I came back. I did not, however, say when that would be. I saw the drift, and resolved what to do.

Galveston was not like the Brazos River; the entrance was wide, and I had made a complete survey of it, and saw that it was quite easy for a small vessel to run out past the Forts on a dark night. I therefore said nothing, but pretended to wait patiently.

While we had been lying at Galveston an elderly gentleman, a Roman Catholic priest known as Father Ryan, applied to me to give him a passage out. He wished to go to Havana, but if he could get to any of the ports in Mexico he could easily get from thence to Havana.

I said I could not take him. I had no kind of accommodation, every part of my vessel being blocked up with cotton, besides, being so long in Texas, I was short of provisions, and

I advised him to apply to some of the steamers, which would take him direct to Havana.

He said he had done so, but they had not the least idea of when they would sail, and could give him no kind of promise. He pressed me very hard, said he would bring his own provisions with him; he asked no accommodation, he would lay on the deck, on the top of the cotton, or anywhere, and would pay me for his passage whatever I would ask.

I said the money was no object, and tried to dissuade him, and told him of the discomforts, the dangers from the seas and enemies, and the exposures he would be subject to.

He still persisted, till I got a little impatient, and remarked that surely he must have some very strong reasons for getting away from Texas, when he would seek to get away from it in a way that would scarcely be adopted except by a fugitive. The old man seemed exceedingly hurt at my remark. He looked to the ground, said he had a duty to perform, and I thought I saw a tear drop from his eye.

I felt sorry that I had made the remark, and would have liked to have recalled it.

"Never mind me, Father Ryan," said I, "I was only joking. Come along, get your kit on board; we will do the best we can for you."

I told him, however, that sailors had sometimes strange superstitions about clergymen as "Jonahs" on board vessels, but I did not think my crew were much of that school. However, he had better maintain a happy, cheerful manner with them.

He said he knew one of them, Hagan by name, who had been a member of his flock.

"Oh, then," said I, "you will be all right."

The old man was not long before he had his slender store of baggage on board, and showed me his passport to go out on any vessel, and I set Hagan to fit up a little bunk for him abaft the cabin steps, with which he was highly pleased.

I had some suspicion that the Messrs. M. were keeping an eye on the vessel, and planning some device whereby they might get her detained until I acceded to their demands; and as there was at that time some vessels wanted at the Quarter-

master's Department to bring wood and water to Galveston,* although it was not supposed or intended that vessels loaded for sea would be impressed for that purpose; yet vessels going to sea could be, and were often, stopped upon a very small pretext, and what I had been told at the Provost Marshal's office confirmed my suspicion.

In talking with Captain Shaeffer I related to him what had been told me at the Provost Marshal's office, and that I feared there might be an order served upon us that no vessels should be allowed to go to sea until further orders, and I suggested that we should slip away from the wharf before they got any chance to serve any order upon us, and go away to the other side of the bay and dodge about so that they could not find us, and, as the dark moon was coming on, put to sea the first good breeze and dark night.

"But," said he, "how will you do? You have not got your permission to pass the Forts."

"Confound the permission," said I. "A good breeze and a dark night is all the passport I want. And I am not going to ask a passport. I have made a complete survey of the entrance, and on a dark night we can easily pass both the guard-boat and the Forts without them seeing us; besides, I don't think they would take the trouble to try to stop us if they did see us."

"I believe you are right," said he. "When do you think of going?"

"Well, as I think this order is directed more against me than against you, I think I shall slip off to-night. They will think I have gone up to Houston to arrange with the consignees. But I will not suggest to you to come so soon, as you have got your young wife in Galveston," I added, laughing.

"All right," said he, "I will follow you in a day or two. Where will I find you?"

"I will go up to the shoals, give the vessel another scrub-

* Galveston, being situated on a low sand island, was at that time very badly supplied with water, the inhabitants having to depend mostly on the rain water collected in cisterns. Many of these cisterns had been destroyed or damaged by the cannonading during the attack upon the town, and in the event of a long drought water became exceedingly scarce.

bing, and gather a lot of oysters. This is September, they will now be good."

"Very well," said he, "I will meet you there."

We slipped away quietly from the wharf that night, and got up to the shoals on the following day. We here gave the vessel another cleaning, and gathered two or three barrels of oysters. At night the water was alive with fish, of which we caught a good many. We landed at a farm, where we purchased some sweet potatoes and vegetables and poultry.

In a day or two afterwards the *Mary Elizabeth* came and joined us.

I asked Captain Shaeffer if he had heard any remarks about us leaving the wharf at Galveston. He said not from any official source, but one man seemed to have missed the *Rob Roy*, and was inquiring very earnestly where she had gone to.

"I told him," said he, "that you had sailed, which of course you had, but I did not say where to."

My crew gave a hand to the *Mary Elizabeth* to clean, and gather a store of oysters. Then both vessels stood away to the east side of the bay so as to be ready to run out to sea the first good wind and dark night, the strongest and steadiest winds being now from the eastward.

A little incident occurred here, scarcely worth relating except as touching the superstitions of seamen. On the morning after we left the shoals it was discovered that a small cat was on board, and how it got on board no one knew. At first it was thought that it might have been some pet of Father Ryan's, and he had thought to make a stowaway of puss, but as he disclaimed all knowledge of it such an apparition caused some surprise, and was a slight temptation to superstition.

The men, however, guessed the source from which it had come. The *Mary Elizabeth's* boat had been often alongside on the previous day, and it was supposed that some of her crew, in order to get rid of it, had secretly slipped puss on board of our vessel. It seemed to have been a cherished superstition among sailors that putting a cat ashore from a vessel was always followed by some bad luck, and the cat, being a nuisance on board, they had thought to evade the consequences by smuggling it on board of another vessel.

CHAPTER XV.

Outward trip—Going out without a passport—Sail in company with the *Mary Elizabeth*—Passing close to a gunboat—The strictest silence enjoined—A cock crowing nearly betrays us—Singular superstition arising from the incident—Overtaken by a hurricane—More danger from the seas than the enemies this trip—The *Mary Elizabeth* never heard of—Dangerous crossing of the bar at Tampico.

ABOUT the 12th of September a good, steady breeze was blowing from the eastward, which freshened up towards evening. And the chance had come.

We were well to windward, as we intended to run out by the south-west, or Swash Channel, as it was called. At the place where we lay we could see plainly all the blockading fleet and note their position.

Beyond the shoal which separated this channel from the sea, and very near to the outer mouth of the channel, lay a gunboat in what we considered a very bad position for us.

In passing out by this channel the first difficulty was to find it, where it branched off the main channel. On entering it, it led in a south-westerly direction, with from eight to nine feet of water, with the land on the right, and on the left the shoal, which considerably broke the sea and kept the channel tolerably smooth.

At the western extremity of the shoal the channel opened pretty suddenly into deep water, and very close to this mouth lay the gunboat. On the inside, between the gunboat and the shore, there seemed to be very little room to pass without getting dangerously close to the breakers, but on the outside of her there was a good wide space between her and the next vessel, and through which we might pass; but that tempting opening—which was the widest space in the whole fleet—might only be a trap shown during the day, while some of the cruisers which kept steam up and cruised about during the day might take their place there after dark and be ready to pounce upon any craft that might have been lured into an attempt to pass through this wide gate. We, therefore, determined to try the narrow path.

Everything was got ready, the large boat was hoisted on board and lodged in a place reserved for it forward of the main-hatchway. Inside of the boat was placed a large coop or arrangement made for the poultry to roost upon, among which was a fine cock, to which some of the men had taken a great fancy, but which was soon afterwards sentenced to death as a traitor. Into the dingey was stowed some small packages of cotton, made up for the purpose, to shield the steersman in case of shots from boats astern. Double reefs were put in the mainsail and foresail, so that under low canvas we would be shadowed by the dark loom of the land to leeward.

The wind kept increasing, and in the evening there was a fine, steady breeze, and the night was dark.

About eight o'clock we raised anchor and proceeded down the bay. We passed well to the eastward of the wreck of the *Westfield* and the guard-boat, keeping the lead going, and taking care to avoid observation from the Forts. After a little difficulty we found the entrance to the Swash Channel, and got into nine feet of water, with the land on the starboard side. All well so far.

Along this channel we steered cautiously. No lights could be used at the compass; but on entering the channel the course was taken from a star and regulated by the lead.

With my night-glass I looked out for the gunboat, and I soon discovered her on the port bow, close on, and well in shore she was, and there was very little room to pass between her and the breakers. The wind, however, was a little north of east, and there was not a great sea on, and the breakers did not sound loud.

As we got towards the end of the shoal the swell from seaward caused us to keep in the deepest water, and it was evident that we must pass the gunboat very close. The night was dark, and by the dark loom of the land beyond there was not so much danger of us being observed; but the strictest silence was demanded, and orders were passed in an undertone; and I was uneasy at the noise made by the breaking of the water from the bow of the vessel, which had now got past the lee of the reef and into the swell of the open sea, which was causing her to heave considerably.

We were just coming abreast of the gunboat, and every breath was hushed, when "Cock-a-leery-lou!" rang out in a loud and clear note from the hen-coop in the boat amidship.

"Confound that brute," I hissed out, in a rage; "twist its neck."

The order was quickly executed; there was a momentary flutter of wings, and poor chanticleer had given his last crow.

In a few minutes we had brought the gunboat on our weather-quarter, and as there was considerable swell, and the breakers close under our lee, we luffed up and stood off the land a little.

We had not proceeded far when, looking with my night-glass, I discovered another cruiser on the port bow much larger than the one we had passed, evidently with steam up and not at anchor, as she was not riding to the wind like the others.

Hard up and ease off sheets, and we were off before the wind heading towards the shore, expecting every moment to be fired upon; but we soon lost her in the darkness, and had just time to luff up and get sheets hauled in before we reached the breakers, and we now stood a good distance to the westward before we stood off the land again.

This latter vessel had, no doubt, come up after dark to watch the wide gap we had observed before sunset between the first and second vessels on the left wing of the blockading fleet, and had we passed out through that gap she would most likely have picked us up.

Since we had passed the Confederate guard-boat we had seen nothing of the *Mary Elizabeth*, though she raised anchor at the same time, and followed us down the bay; but as we had heard no firing we concluded that she had got out all right.

The object now was to get as far out to sea as possible before daylight, and this was the all-important object of a sailing vessel running the blockade on the outward trip. A steamer could always depend upon making her distance, but if the wind died away a sailing vessel was left helpless in the very jaws of the enemy.

There was no doubt but the sleepy hours of the morning was

the best time to pass through the fleet, and were generally taken advantage of on the inward trip when it could be managed; but on the outward trip it was necessary to pass out in the fore-part of the night, so as to get a good offing before daylight.

The danger of capture was not so great from the vessels which actually blocked the harbour as from those which cruised round in the immediate vicinity; and a much greater number of vessels were captured by the cruisers which cruised off the coast and round about the blockaded ports than by the blockading fleet. Therefore, the greater distance which could be run from the port during the night, the greater the expanse of the circle to police and the less chance of capture.

We were now favoured with a fine, strong breeze, and as soon as we were satisfied that we were well clear of the patrols, we luffed up and stood off the coast, took reefs out of the mainsail and foresail, and set staysail and gaff-topsail.

This was the real cream of blockade running — the first night on the outward trip, with a good cargo of the valuable cotton; a rattling breeze, and every stitch of canvas the vessel could stagger under, neither lights, look-out, or any other precaution thought of, but dash recklessly on,* getting further and further from the cruiser-infested coast and out to the wide range of the open ocean, where the wide expanse made cruisers few and far between.

The breeze kept steady, but I did not leave the deck till 4 a.m., when I calculated that we would be at least seventy miles from the coast. I then turned in for a short nap, telling the mate to scan the horizon well at daybreak, and call me if anything was to be seen.

At daylight the mate called me in something like alarm, saying that a large sailing vessel was on the weather-quarter, bearing down upon us.

I jumped on deck and examined her with the glass, then, laughing at the mate, asked him if he did not know the *Mary Elizabeth.*

* On these seas at that time there was so little traffic that there was little need of a look-out, and it was not the policy of blockade runners to carry lights.

He said she had got very small in appearance from the time he first saw her; but when first seen she looked as large as a barque, and Fred had declared it to be the *John Anderson*, which had chased us so hard on our last voyage.

I said the *John Anderson* was long off the station. The reason she looked so large was the phenomenon of him having seen her at daybreak directly between him and the rising sun. She was about seven miles' distant, and as it got lighter it left no doubt that it was the *Mary Elizabeth*, and I remembered that she was exactly in the same position when we sailed together last voyage.

I now remembered that Captain Shaeffer would know nothing of the understanding made at Havana among blockade-running captains; that if they sighted each other at sea they should stand away from each other, so as to lessen the danger of both being captured should one be sighted by a cruiser; and I had forgotten to tell him of it.

The breeze still continued, but it had gone round a little to the south of east. We had been steering throughout the night about south to get away from the coast, but our course was about south by west. So I changed our course to S.S.W., so as to separate us from the *Mary Elizabeth*, but she followed us on the same course. I then luffed up to south so that the two vessels would meet, and signalled to speak. He either did not see or understand the signal, or perhaps thought that I had seen some danger to the westward and was steering away from it, for he luffed up also. As I saw I could not make him under stand I kept away on our course, S. by W.

About this time Father Ryan, who I had not seen or noticed since we left our anchorage, put his head out of the cabin-door.

Father Ryan, who was of Irish birth, proved to be of an exceedingly good-natured and kind-hearted man. Since he came on board he seemed to have ingratiated himself with the crew. While in Galveston Bay he had gone in the boat with them, fishing and gathering oysters—a kind of food of which he was particularly fond. He was also very wishful to make himself useful in assisting the men in any work they might be doing, and was very desirous of learning how to splice or make knots.

"Good morning, Father Ryán," said I, as he looked out. "How have you passed the night? Have you been sea-sick?"

"Not a bit of it," said he; "I have been very comfortable, thanks to you."

"When did you turn in?" said I. "I never saw you from the time we raised anchor."

"I daresay not," said he; "you was too much engaged; but I was on deck until you hoisted all the sails, and I heard the vessel making the water fly; but you got out nicely. How far will we be from Galveston now?"

"Well on to a hundred miles, I should say."

"Oh, that is surely good! What vessel is yon?"

"That is the *Mary Elizabeth*, that sailed along with us."

"Oh, indeed!" said he. "You are beating her."

"Not much; the two vessels are much on a par as to sailing."

"Well," said he, looking around, contemplatively, "is not this wonderful! grand! beautiful! Captain, when you look around on that great expanse of ocean, with these large, blue waves with their white crests dazzling so beautifully in the morning sun, does it not remind you of the grandeur and purity of God's works?"

"It does, most truly, Father Ryan," said I, sympathetically, for I had got so disgusted with the deceitful actions of mankind that I felt happy at being again on the bosom of the honest ocean.

"Great ocean!" he went on, moralizing, "man can change the face of the land, he can build cities, harbours, railroads, clear away forests, and make the desert blossom as the rose; but the sea he cannot change; it remains the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

I had just taken an altitude of the sun, and went below with the sextant and slate, while Father Ryan made his way forward to where the men were at breakfast, crawling over the cotton bales on his hands and knees.

When I came on deck again, Hagan, who was at the wheel, said to me—

"Captain, what do you think old George would have done if he had been with us this trip? I swear he would never have left Galveston with us."

"How so?"

"Why! with both a priest and a cat on board."

"Why, what harm is there in either?"

"Oh! none that I know of; but I know George would not have gone with us."

"We could have given the vessel a list to port," said I, "and that would have outbalanced priests and cats and everything else with George; but these are old and foolish superstitions."

"Oh, I know that," said he; "and I am sure I don't believe in them; and I was going to say, what harm could there be in any kind of man or beast being on board; but I am not so sure of that now."

"Why so?"

"Why, what did you think of that cock last night trying to give the alarm just as we were passing close to the Yankee gunboat?"

"What is there supernatural in that?" said I. "It is a very natural thing for a cock to crow when he is wakened out of his sleep. I would have considered it more supernatural if he had held his tongue till we were past the gunboat."

"It would have been better for him, any how; for natural or not, I made short work of him."

"Was it you that killed him?" said I.

"It was; and just as he was flapping his wings to give another crow."

"It is a pity you killed him," said I. "If you could have thrown a bag or something of that kind over him it would have stopped him."

"You cried out to twist his neck, and there was no time to think over it."

Breakfast being ready, the cook had called Father Ryan, and as there were no supercargoes now on board, only Father Ryan, myself, and the mate sat down to breakfast.

"Captain," said Father Ryan, "I hear you have been committing murther last night."

"How is that, Father Ryan?"

"Why, in killing that nice rooster."

"Well, yes; it was a pity; it was done on the spur of the

moment; but they might have heard him on the gunboat, and that would have led to our capture."

"Oh, that it would!" said he. "It was such a loud crow; but is it not a very strange thing that he should have given the alarm just as we were passing the gunboat? Had it been the usual time to crow, it would have been quite natural, but it was not yet nine o'clock, and it is something unnatural for a cock to crow at that hour."

"That is what I find strange about it," said the mate. "I am not superstitious, but it does look strange; and it was a very unusual time for a cock to crow, and just at the moment he could betray us."

"That is what the crew are all saying," said Father Ryan. "You told me, Captain, that your crew were not superstitious, but they are all talking much about it, as ominous of bad luck for the voyage; and they are a little downcast. Hagan maintains that the devil had got on board in the form of a cock, but that he had done for him, anyhow. I told them that they should not indulge in those foolish superstitions, that all such things just happened by chance in the ordinary course of things."

"Well," said I, laughing, "it is astonishing to see how people can manufacture a mysterious affair out of the most commonplace event. There is nothing more easily accounted for than the cock crowing at the time it did. That it was not the usual time for cocks to crow is true enough, but cocks will crow at any time if they are awakened out of their sleep. Now the fowls had all roosted and gone to sleep before we left our anchorage, and you will remember when we got past the reef and got into the open sea the heavy swell coming past the end of the reef caused the vessel to make several heavy lurches?"

"Oh, I remember that," said Father Ryan. "I was standing in the companion, and was nearly thrown down the cabin-stair."

"Well," continued I, "I was standing near the fore-rigging, and heard the fluttering of the fowls in the boat as they were thrown from their perches by the rolling of the vessel, and as the rolling subsided a little, and just as we approached the gunboat, the cock having got on to his perch again, naturally began to crow."

"Oh, well, now that explains the whole matter entirely," said Father Ryan; "and I am so glad, and I will soon set the men's minds at rest, for nothing could be more natural."

The mate now laughed, and said that accounted for it exactly; and he seemed greatly relieved in his mind.

"Well now," continued Father Ryan, "does not that show that many things which happen, and are thought mysterious and supernatural and sometimes create superstition in the minds of weak people, might be easily explained if the real causes were known."

Breakfast being over, Father Ryan hastened to explain to the crew the cause of the apparent mysterious affair, which he succeeded in doing, as soon could be seen from their laughing and bantering each other for having entertained serious misgivings in the matter.

Throughout this day the breeze continued, but got gradually lighter, and hauled more round to the southward, which caused us to head more to the westward, but we saw nothing the whole day except the *Mary Elizabeth*, which still kept in sight, though luffing up and standing more to the southwards.

On the following day the wind was light, and nearly due south. The *Mary Elizabeth* was not in sight, which I was glad of, but we could only hold a course about S.W. by W., and as we could do no better, I thought of getting west, near to the coast of Mexico. For although I knew that the current from the south would be stronger against us there, yet I knew that if once south of the Rio Grande we would be more out of the way of cruisers on that coast.

For several days the winds were very light, and from the south, and we made but slow progress, constantly keeping a look-out from the mast-head for cruisers; but we only saw one, which, being observed in time, all sails were taken down, and she passed about ten miles to the northward without observing us.

At last we got south of latitude 25° and longitude 96°, and we considered that we were now out of the most frequented track of the cruisers, but still they might be met anywhere.

The wind was exceedingly light and baffling, varying about a point to the east or west of south, while the current of the

Gulf Stream from the south was so strong that we could scarcely hold the southing we had made.

For one or two days it seemed that we could not get out of the spot we were in.

About the eighth day out we again sighted the *Mary Elizabeth.* She was just in about her old position from us—about eight miles to the eastward—and she seemed to be pursuing the same tactics as ourselves.

The same day it fell dead calm, and about noon a large circle was observed round the sun of a purple colour, which some of the men declared indicated the approach of a heavy gale, and that we might in a short time look out for a violent norther. Anything would be a relief to this suspense, and a norther would be welcomed if it did not come too severe.

As it was about dead calm, sails were taken down, and every strop, hook, and cringle examined and made as secure as possible. Flying jib and small sails stowed, and everything about deck firmly lashed and made snug. Double reefs put in mainsail and foresail, and single reef in jib, and sails hoisted again, and we looked for the change in the weather.

We did not have long to wait. About 3 p.m. the sky darkened all round, and by 4 p.m. it was fearfully dark, the sky to the northward being black as ink. There was now no mistake but that we were going to have a heavy gale, but whether it was going to be a West India hurricane or a Texas norther we did not know.

It was not just yet the season for the regular northers, but there were often in those latitudes heavy gales about the equinox which sometimes took the form of northers, and blew with great violence, but they were generally of short duration, and might be said to be something between the Texas norther and the West India hurricane.

There could now be seen under the black cloud to the northward what appeared to be snow hillocks on the horizon, which soon spread out, and was coming towards us. This of course was the sea lashed into a foam by the fury of the wind, but still not a breath of wind had reached us, and the vessel still rolled in a dead calm.

It soon came on, however, direct from the north, and first

a few drops of rain struck the vessel, and then the cold wind which indicated, to all appearance at least, it was a norther. It struck the vessel with such violence that I thought it would have torn the masts out of her before she gathered headway.

I was not sure how the *Rob Roy* would lay to under a close-reefed foresail, and I determined, as the wind was fair for us, to make the best of it, and scud before it.

The vessel was now rushing through the water at a great rate, but when the full force of the gale came up it struck her with such violence that it seemed as it would tumble her stern overhead.

"Get the mainsail off her," I cried.

This was easier said than done. The sheet had been eased off to run before the wind, and the belly of the sail was pressing against the shrouds, and with the awful force of the wind it was impossible to move it. To ease her in the meantime the peak purchase was cast off, and the peak dropped. This did ease her a little, but the gale kept increasing in violence, and the mainsail must come off her.

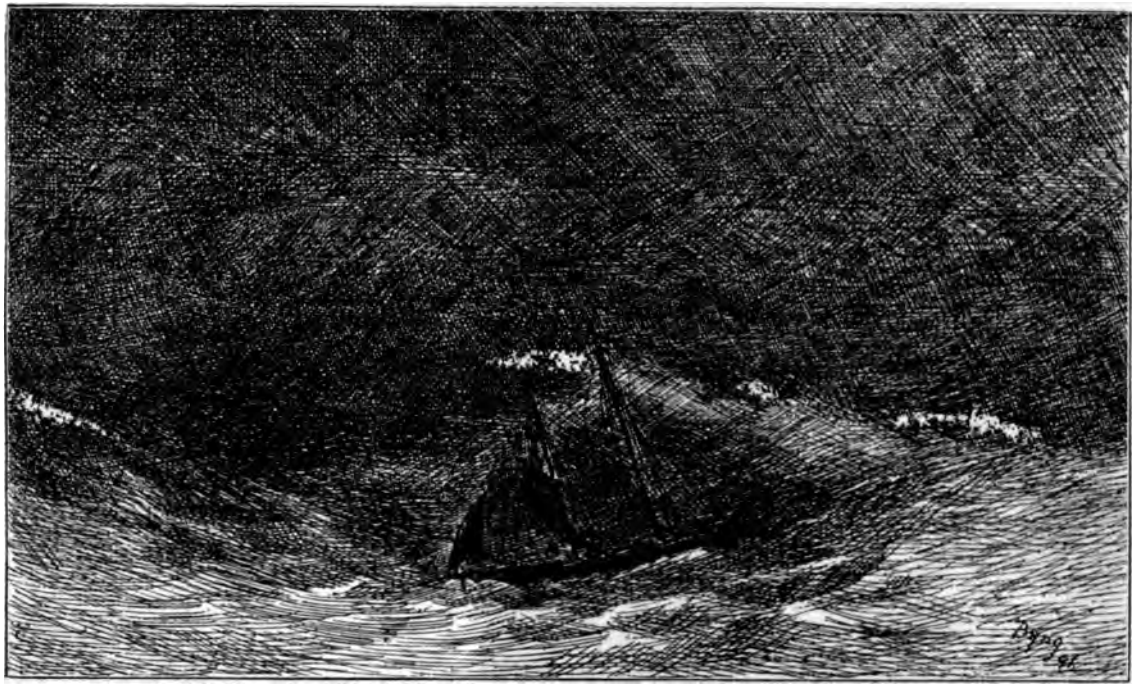
To handle such a large sail in such a tempest was no easy task, and as the boom was eased off it must be got aboard No strength could haul it in against the force of such wind; the vessel must be rounded to.

"Hard down your helm!" was the word. The helm was put hard down, but the peak having been dropped she would not come up, but rushed along in the trough of the sea with the full force of the hurricane on her beam. That she did not lose her masts or capsize showed great strength and stability.

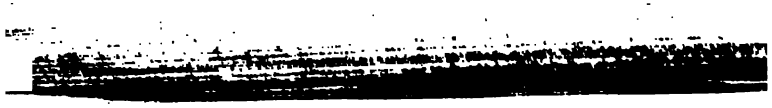
"Let go the jib halliards." This was done and the jib hauled down. This had the desired effect, and she came up into the wind. The fore sheet was hauled in, and she was held up till the main sheet could be hauled in, the sail lowered and stowed securely.

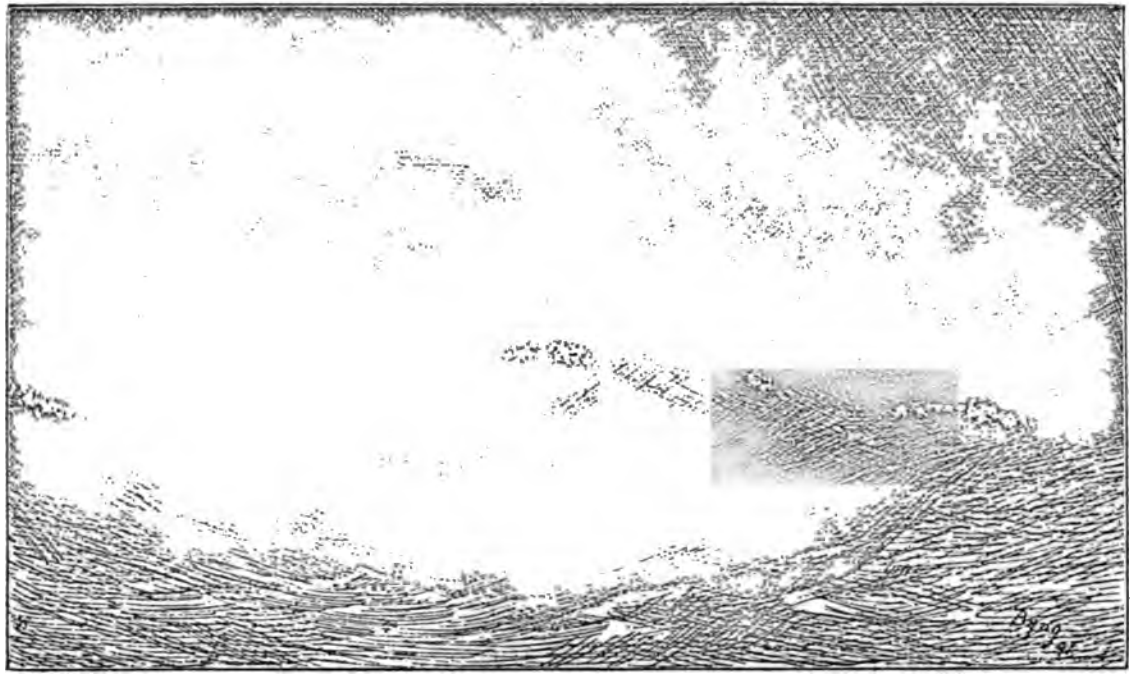
The gale had now become terrific, and the wind being directly against the current of the Gulf Stream, the waves rose very fast and to a great height. While we had the vessel thus rounded to, we thought to try if she would lay to in the gale, but the seas having got to a great height, and





MIDNIGHT IN A HURRICANE.





MIDNIGHT IN A HURRICANE.

coming with great force, and the vessel having such a light hold on the water, she was thrown back stern on with every wave, causing her to fall heavily on her rudder, which I feared might be carried away; we thought it best to scud before the wind under a close reefed foresail.

The last reef was then put in the foresail, the jib tack hauled to windward, and part of the jib run up. She payed off quickly, and bounded off before the wind. The jib was then taken down and cleared so as to be run up quickly in case of necessity.

She now scudded along beautifully, but the wind increased far beyond our imagination, and was something appalling, but it did not vary a point in its direction. We steered about due south; everything depended upon the steersman; to have broached to would have been destruction.

The night was very dark, and the terrible roaring of the wind and the hissing of the spray off the tops of the waves seemed at times high over our heads. No one sought to sleep that night; the men were gathered aft, where they stood in silence with their eyes alternately upon the foresail and the man at the helm. Sometimes the silence would be broken by the expression—"Well, that is blowing pretty stiff."

Up till midnight all went well enough, but there was no abatement of the gale; it was rather increasing, and the seas were breaking more. Our only fears were for the foresail splitting.

About 1 a.m. a tremendous sea caused the vessel to yaw a little, and the foreboom jibed from starboard to port like the shot of a cannon, and as she recovered herself it jibed back again with the same force. This was dangerous work, as each time it struck against the fore-shrouds, and might have carried them away. I went with the mate to examine, but found no harm done. The fore-sheet, which worked in a traveller on deck, was taut as a bar, although the boom was pressing hard against the shrouds. Thinking to ease the boom off the shrouds a little, we got all hands to try a pull on the fore-sheet, but such was the pressure of the wind on the sail that we could not gain an inch. To have put a back tackle on the boom to prevent it jibing would have been

madness. So the hauling part of the sheet was made fast to the block at the traveller, and the boom allowed to have its play, and every one warned to keep out from the sweep of the boom, as one blow from it would have sent them beyond hail.

Shortly after this the boom jibed again with a loud report, and as quickly jibed back again, but in jibing back the jaw rope parted, and the boom unshipped from the mast, and lay across ship, with one end pressing against the mast, and the other against the fore-shrouds.

This was a bad state of things, but it was impossible to do anything with it, as such was the force of the wind, and the boom adrift and flying about, that it was dangerous to go near it.

It was evident that we were going to lose the foresail, and as our last resource we must try and get the jib upon her; but just as the men were trying to get forward to loose the jib a tremendous sea came rolling up astern, and a large body of water, detached from the top of it by the fury of the wind, fell on board right amidships, filling the large boat with water, and causing the vessel to reel over almost on her beam ends. She quickly recovered herself again, and singularly and fortunately the sudden jerk started the foreboom from where it lay pressing against the mast and shrouds, and shipped it back into its place again. Lucky event!

"Well done, *Rob Roy!*" shouted the mate, as he seized a short piece of rope used as a stopper and darted forward to secure the boom in its place. I was quickly with him with more hands, warning them to keep forward of the mast out of the sweep of the boom. The rope was quickly passed round the neck of the boom, and brought round the mast to hold it in its place till a new jaw rope was got ready, when as many of the purls as could be picked up were strung upon it, and it was rove in its place, and the boom was all right again.

The vessel was now found to be staggering under the weight of the large boat full of water on deck. This must be emptied out; to bail it out would be dangerous work, as the boat was just under the sweep of the fore-boom. The mate remembered that there was a large plug in the boat, but the stopper was in. We tried to get the stopper out, but there were difficulties

in the way. It could not be got at from the outside for the deck-load, and the fowls having been all used up, the hen coop had been broken up, and an empty water-cask placed in the boat where it had been. This water-cask was right over the stopper, and the foreboom was just above the water-cask, so that it could not be moved.

The water-cask must be sacrificed. A hammer was got, and the cask knocked to pieces, and the mate, to avoid a stroke of the boom, sprawled along in the water, dived down and withdrew the stopper, and the water rushed out, and very soon the vessel was relieved of that unsteady top weight, and she bounded on all right again.

The gale had now reached its height, but still blew steady from the same point, and we began to imagine that it was abating a little.

As daylight began to appear we observed a small slit in the foresail, which, on being examined from the back or lee side of the sail, was found to be one of the seams which was just beginning to open. A piece of strong canvas was got, which, with a bent needle, was stitched strongly over the back of the place to help it a little.

When daylight broke clear the scene was truly grand. The most experienced man on board had never seen such a sea, but though the waves were tremendous high it could not be called a dangerous cross chop of a sea. It was perfectly regular, and if from our position in it we could not afford to call it sublimely beautiful, we had at least to admit that it was grand and awful.

It seemed like a succession of mountain ridges perfectly straight and parallel to each other, rolling furiously in one direction, and between each a level plain about an eighth of a mile wide covered with white foam. This, I presume, was caused by the violent gale blowing steady from one point directly against the Gulf Stream.

About half-past seven the gale had somewhat abated, and soon after the cook managed to have some breakfast ready. Father Ryan, who had been on deck the greater part of the night, was now gazing steadily upon the scene.

"What do you think of that gale, Father Ryan?" said I.

"Awful! truly awful," said he. "What kind of a gale do you call that? Is that a hurricane?"

"It blows hard enough for one," said I, "although it is too steady from one point for that. I think it is a sort of equinoctial norther. What do you think of that sea?"

"Oh, that is terrible," said he. "I would not think it safe for a small vessel like this."

"Many would think the same, and it is hard enough upon her, but she is buoyant, and rises finely upon it, and has come through it very well so far, and the worst is now past, for the gale has about spent itself."

"Oh, yes," said he, "it is calming down now, but when I looked out upon that awful sea this morning and thought of the calm sea of yesterday, I said, 'Surely awful are the works of the Almighty, and how suddenly He can send on the calmest sea such a storm as will raise it into angry mountains, and yet with the same hand He can guide safely through it a small, helpless vessel like this.'"

I agreed with him, and said we ought to be grateful.

By 9 a.m. the gale had much abated, and the morning, which up till now had been dark and cloudy, began to clear up, and soon after the sun broke through, and I got an observation, and assuming our latitude, found our longitude to be about 97° 20′, which placed us about thirty miles from the coast of Mexico.

We now got more sail upon the vessel, and soon after we observed that the northerly wind of the gale had entirely spent itself, and we were into a light steady breeze from the eastward, although there was still a heavy swell from the northward. This indicated that the gale had not extended much further south, and we were now into the usual weather again.

The danger from the seas being for the time past, the old standing danger again cropped up, which was danger from the enemy, and, as we were now getting near to Tampico, it was exceedingly probable that some of their cruisers would be hovering in the neighbourhood with the view of picking up any blockade runner bound for that port. We, therefore, stood more to the westward, intending to sight the land, and then crawl down along the coast as we had done last trip.

We now began to wonder how it had fared with the *Mary Elizabeth*, which must have caught the gale at the same time with us. I knew that in point of management she would not lack, as she had a master and crew well experienced in these seas and in the management of this class of vessels. She was better provided in that respect than the *Rob Roy*, but she was a smaller vessel, and I knew that her sails were not of the same strength. We looked in all directions from the mast-head, but could see nothing of her.

As we stood to the westward, we saw something that looked like wreckage, but on steering towards it we found it to be large trees floating, which appeared to have been quite recently brought down some river, indicating that there had been heavy rain and floods in the northern parts of Mexico.

I may here anticipate, and say that of the *Mary Elizabeth* nothing was ever heard. Captain Shaeffer's brother afterwards called upon me in Havana to get the last and only information that he could ever obtain, and that was of her being seen by us on the day before the gale, and I have no doubt but that she foundered in that gale; and though she was larger, a better sea-boat, better found, and better managed than a great many of the craft which engaged in that rough and reckless trade, it was, strange to say, the only instance I ever knew of one of them being lost at sea. There was no doubt, however, that the gale, so far as it extended, was the heaviest which had been for some years.

We soon sighted the land, and at noon I got the latitude, and found that we were about fifteen miles to the northward of Tampico River, and we arrived off the mouth of the river about 3 p.m.

We found anchored there two vessels, both schooners. One of them was just such a vessel as the *Sylvia*, which we had met here six months before, and, like her, was from St. John with a cargo of lumber for Tampico. The other was a larger vessel, but she seemed light, as in ballast, and was anchored further out.

The former vessel we sailed up to and spoke. I cannot now remember her name, but will call her the *St. John*, as she was from that port. She had passed to the south of Cuba, and

came in from the eastward, and had experienced nothing of the gale, but judged from the swell from the northward that there had been a heavy gale in that direction. They drew about six feet of water, and they wished to cross the bar and go up to Tampico Town.

The pilot's boat had been off in the morning, but it was impossible to take them over the bar at that time owing to the very high sea caused by the heavy swell from the northward, meeting in the channel the strong current of the Tampico River, which was then very high owing to great floods in the interior. The pilots had promised, however, to come out again in the afternoon, when, if the swell had gone down a little, they would be able to take them over.

As this bar at Tampico is of shifting quicksand, the channel through it keeps constantly changing, and it is necessary for the pilots to take soundings regularly—almost every day. It is sometimes very crooked and difficult to pass through, and if a vessel gets on to the shoal it is generally a total loss, and if it should be rough weather it is often attended with the loss of all hands, as no boat can live in the breakers. The entrance to this channel from seaward was supposed at this time to be about half a mile to the southward of where it was when we were here six months before, but it was very difficult to define the exact place.

As the pilots had promised to take over in the afternoon the *St. John*, which drew six feet of water, I conceived they could have no difficulty with the *Rob Roy*, which drew only four feet nine inches. We, therefore, dropped anchor and signalled for a pilot. After waiting about an hour there was no appearance of any pilot-boat coming off, and the sky had suddenly changed, and towards the north-east looked black and threatening. This was alarming.

Any one who knows anything of Tampico Roads knows what a dangerous place it is in a heavy north-easterly wind. A very high sea sets in, and with such violence that no amount of ground-tackling will hold the vessel; and I have known large steamers with both anchors down and working propellors at full speed scarcely able to hold against it and keep off the breakers, while with a sailing vessel it is impossible to claw off.



As soon as I saw this appearance of a change in the weather I set about getting the anchor up to try and get out to sea, and I saw the other vessels doing the same, but it was too late. We had scarcely got sails set when it was down upon us. We set every bit of canvas, and gave full centre-board to see if we could weather the reefs to the southward, but we soon saw that we could not clear them on that stretch, and we tacked and stood to the northward as far as we could reach for the breakers, and then stood back to try again to weather the reefs to the southward; but to our dismay we found that we had not gained an inch, and the sea was now getting up and throwing us more to leeward, and we saw that the other two vessels were not making any more of it than ourselves.

This was something terrible to realize so suddenly and unexpected. To leeward and on each side was the shoals which hemmed us in, and on them the mountainous waves broke with great fury; to windward was the threatening clouds which betokened a heavy gale, and coming it was with certainty, and not the slightest chance of a lull or change in the wind, and night coming on. The gale did not come on with such violence as on the previous day, but it mattered little in the position we were in; it was sufficient to bring on our destruction, and that with certainty and in a very short time, and what would we not have given for the same sea room we had last night, even with the gale in all its fury.

What to do I did not know. The men looked at me, but no one spoke. I pointed to the deck-load of cotton.

"Men," said I, "the charge of every life is mine. Do you think it would help us any to throw over that deck-load? If you think so, we will throw it over at once."

"It will do no good," they cried out together; "it eases her aloft and gives her a better hold on the water; and if at last we go on the bar there is a chance of saving our lives by clinging to bales of cotton."

"Then," said I, "we cannot claw off. The gale is increasing, night is upon us, and, do our best, we will be in these breakers before an hour. Now, I propose to make an attempt to run the gauntlet. I have been observing with the

glass, and I fancy I see what I take to be the opening to the channel, and I propose to make the attempt to cross the bar. I know it is a desperate and dangerous undertaking, but it is the only chance for our lives. What do you all say?"

"I say try it," said the mate; "it is our only chance."

The men all acquiesced; and said they were ready to obey.

One man then spoke up, and said: "I am ready to leave it to your own judgment, Captain; but if you take my advice when crossing you will steer through where you see the highest seas and the bluest water."

"I believe you are right," I said, "and I intend to do so."

Father Ryan, who stood with an expression something between composure and anxiety on his countenance, looked at me seriously and said, "Try it, Captain, and may the hand of God guide you."

For once at least in my life, I implored the aid of a higher hand. I went to the cabin and took the chronometer and cushioned it in one of the beds, as is usually done in crossing bars, in case of a sudden touch on the ground shaking it, and, going on deck, told the men that everything now depended upon their coolness and prompt action.

The greatest difficulty in crossing a bar through a narrow channel before a heavy sea was to keep the vessel straight in the channel, and prevent her stern being swung round by the heavy seas rolling up astern. In placing the men, the first point to be determined was who was the best steersman. This was accorded to Hagan. To the cook was assigned the charge of the centre-board, the bar of which being near the door of the galley he had been accustomed to work, and lower or raise as required. The mate would take charge aft, with another man at the peak purchase, and be ready to drop the peak of the mainsail if a heavy sea rolling up astern swung her stern round; while two men would be stationed at the jib-sheet to haul to windward and make her pay off, and I would take my station on the top of the cotton amidships, and with my glass look out ahead for the best water, and direct with my hand to the right or left the course to steer. The helmsman would keep his eye on me and steer by the direction of my hand. The mate would also be ready to assist the man at the

helm, or to take the helm in case of the steersman being knocked down by a heavy sea coming over the stern. Father Ryan wished to know where he could be of service. I directed him to watch the companion doors, and keep them shut to prevent a sea going down in the cabin.

The most important part was to find the proper entrance to the channel; and we were now approaching the place which I supposed to be the entrance, and as soon as it was under our lee the gaff-topsail was taken in, but everything else was carried full.

Every man now took his place, and I got upon the top of the cotton with my glass and directed with my hand. As we approached the place, it looked awful; the waves toppled up like the walls of a fortress. Sheets were eased off, and under a full pressure of canvas the vessel rushed at it. She plunged violently, every spar and timber seemed to quiver. There was evidently a strong current against her, while the tremendous seas breaking on each side seemed above our heads. Sometimes I thought we were completely locked in, but still some higher and bluer waves gave indication of the deepest water. Sometimes a tremendous sea would come rolling up astern and throw her stern forward and bring her almost broadside on across the channel; but the peak would be quickly dropped and jib hauled to windward, and she payed off again before another sea came, when the same thing was repeated. We were nearly to the midst of it, but we were not making fast progress owing to the strong current of the river against us. This, however, made her steer better, and convinced me that we were in the right channel; but I feared that the shallowest and worst-defined part of it would be the end next the shore, and often the flying spray blinded me and dimmed the glass in my hand so that I had to keep wiping it with my handkerchief. I could only see ahead when lifted on the top of a huge wave, as, when that passed on, the mountain of water shut off for a time the view forward.

I fancied that the water was getting shallower on each side, the breakers worse, and the channel less defined. When looking forward my eye caught the shore in the distance, and I saw a Mexican flag—the pilot's flag—and I saw they were

waving directions. First inclined to the north, we altered course to the north, then held up straight—steady; then inclined to the south. We altered course to the south, then up straight again—steady.

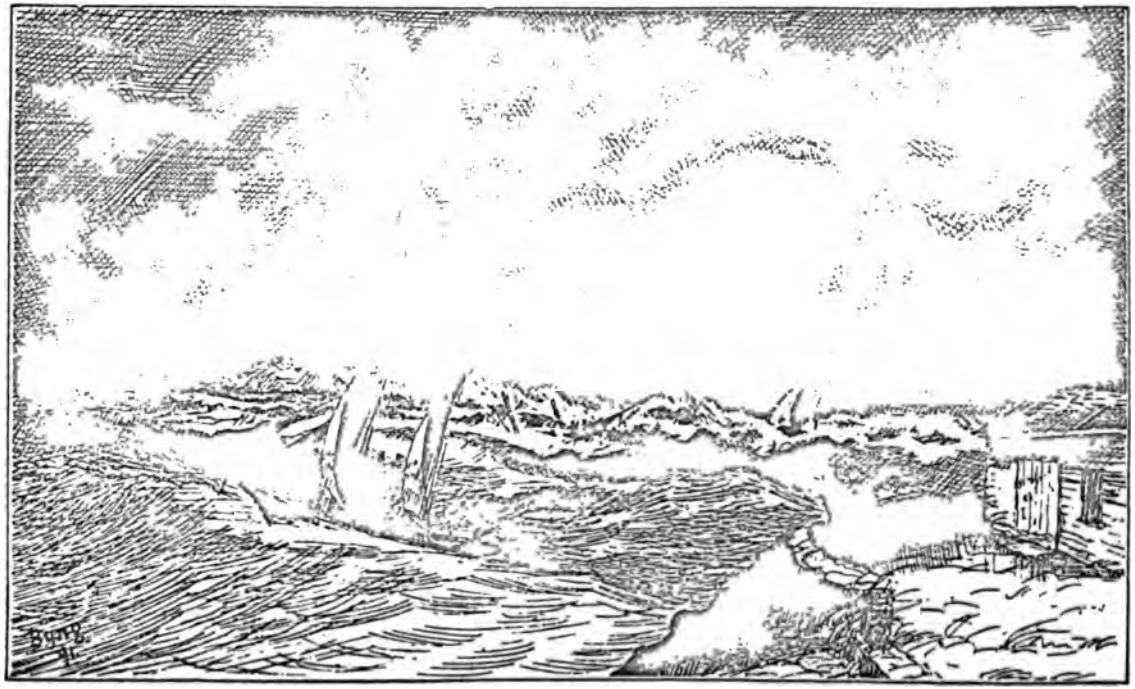
I had now some hopes. We continued on, and soon after all in front seemed breakers, and I saw no appearance of a channel or deep water; but the pilot's flag was held up steady to come straight on. It looked fearful, but on we must go. Several heavy broken waves came up, two of which came over our stern. Another heavier one came up, and, nearly burying us, carried us forward some distance, and when it passed she touched the ground, but it was just lightly and for a moment. She payed off again. Another heavy and broken wave followed, and a violent gust of wind at the same time carried us along through a mass of foam into the deep and smooth water inside of the bar.

"Round her to, haul down staysail and jib, and let go anchor," said I.

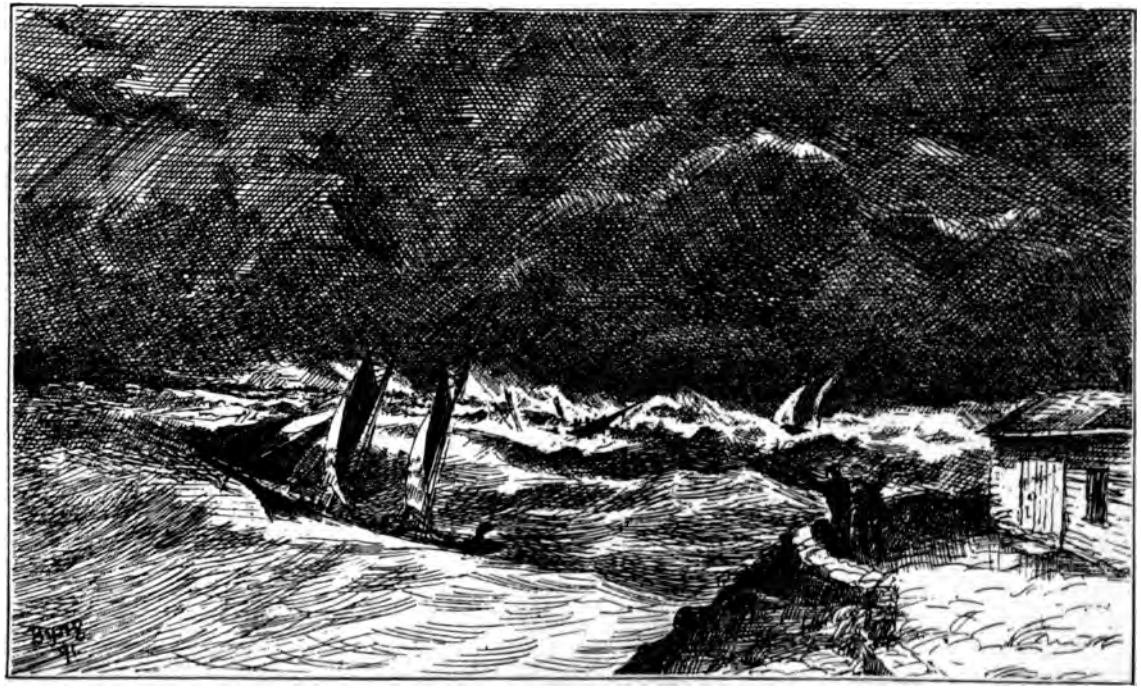
This was soon done. The men stood round, but said nothing. Father Ryan, whose hat had blown overboard, came up to me bareheaded, drenched with salt-water, and with tears in his eyes. He grasped me warmly by the hand, and said seriously, "Captain, the finger of God was there."

"It was," I said; and I never said two words with more sincerity in all my life. Of the many incidents in my somewhat adventurous life I do not think that any made a greater impression on me than the fortune of the last twenty-four hours, and especially this last hour.

I now cast a look seaward to see what had become of the other two vessels. One, the *St John*, having followed us, was within a hundred yards of us, and near the place where we had touched the ground. She was stranded, and the sea was breaking over her, and the men had taken to the rigging. The other vessel was nowhere to be seen. I ordered the men to get out the boat to see if we could in any way render assistance to the crew of the *St. John*. I then went to the cabin for a few minutes. I found that a good deal of water had got down into the cabin, and some things were wet; but what was that considering our providential deliverance.



CROSSING THE BAR AT YAMPICO, IN A GALE.



CROSSING THE BAR AT YAMPICO, IN A GALE.

When I returned on deck, the pilot's boat and the custom's boat were alongside. I rated the pilots for not coming off in the afternoon as they had promised to the *St. John*. They said it was impossible for a boat to go off during the day. When they went off in the morning there was some swell on the bar which they thought would go down, but it increased during the day, so that a boat could not cross the bar, and they supposed that there must have been a heavy gale to the northward. I said there had been a heavy gale, but it seemed not to have reached as far south as Tampico.

I then asked if we could do anything for the crew of the *St. John*. They said that no boat could get to her just then, but there was a chance for both the vessel and crew, as she was in past the worst part of the bar, but the larger schooner was gone with all hands. She had struck near the outer end of the channel and disappeared almost immediately. The *St. John* had a very heavy deck-load of lumber, and if they could get that off her she would float off as the tide was making.

They then made signs to the *St. John* to throw off their deck-load, but it was dangerous for the men to come down from the rigging. The seas breaking over the vessel soon washed away the greater part of the deck-load, and the vessel floated and was driven further in, where she grounded again, but she was so near to the edge of the smooth water that with the help of the floating lumber and our boat and that of the pilots, the men were all saved, although some of them were badly bruised.

I offered to take them up to Tampico Town, but they preferred to remain at the pilot station to see about getting their vessel in over the bar, which they succeeded in doing about two days afterwards. Of the larger schooner nothing was ever seen, not a vestige of her could be discovered when the weather moderated. It was supposed she had been to Vera Cruz, where she had discharged her cargo and had come to Tampico to load with dyewood.

By the time the crew of the *St. John* had been picked up it was getting dark and blowing hard, and to seawards there was every indication of a heavy gale, and we were certainly very

grateful that we had got safe inside of the bar. We took the advantage of the fair wind to run up the river to Tampico Town, which we were not long in accomplishing. The river was very high, and we anchored in front of the town.

Father Ryan now asked leave to offer a short thanksgiving for our safe arrival, which was appreciated.

As no one had slept since the previous day, and it had been rather a trying twenty-four hours, I expected all hands would now be glad to get a little rest, but for this they were not the least inclined; there was the usual rejoicing at getting in. They thought of the dangers now past; the gale howled overhead, but they were now safe and snug in harbour, the voyage successfully ended. Big pay and bonus to receive, they sung and danced about, and said they thought the captain ought to treat them to champagne.

I told them I thought they should have more solemn thoughts, and express their inward gratitude to Heaven for their safety and preservation, and remember the fate of the poor men on the other vessels. They allowed all that, and said they were truly grateful for their preservation, and now that the danger was past they wished to drink my health and give me credit for my able management of the vessel during the trip.

There is a good deal in fair words, and it requires a pretty strong-minded man to be always proof against them. The men had certainly done their duty, and I acknowledged it to them, and said I was willing to show my gratitude in any way that would not be injurious to them; and, turning to Father Ryan, I said, "What do you say, Father Ryan?"

The old man said he thought the men had done their duty well, and if they would only do it as well in keeping within moderation—which he thought he could answer they would—there would be no harm in my giving them a small treat.

It was now past seven o'clock and dark, but there was already some boats alongside—"Bummers"—one of which had done business for us last voyage. I called the owner of this boat and wrote to a respectable restaurant which I knew, directing them to send off at once what would be necessary for a good supper for all hands, with some good

champagne. In the meantime, the crew having got everything made snug and got their wet clothes shifted, the boat came alongside with the articles, and the men enjoyed themselves, and they were as good as their word, and kept within moderation. As I wished every man to get rest, I employed two men from the shore, who had worked for us last voyage, and who I could depend upon, to keep anchor watch, and we all enjoyed a pleasant sleep that night.

Next morning, when the business of discharging and disposing of the cargo recurred to me, it again brought back to me unpleasant feelings which I had forgotten during the excitement of the voyage. The dangers of the seas and enemies were now overcome. Both were honest and to be respected; but to think of the action of those who should have been my friends, and for whom I was undergoing such dangers on this small vessel, was an unpleasant reflection on the top of the happy thoughts of our providential preservation.

CHAPTER XVI.

Landing and dividing of the cargo—Tampico under the Government of Maximilian—The French commanders and the civil authorities—Mexican tardiness and formality—French impulse—Condemned army stores—Sail for Havana—Father Ryan takes passage with us—He is willing to bear a hand—A sailor's method of dealing with well-meaning busybodies—Arrival at Havana.

ON the morning after our arrival a representative of the house to whom we had consigned on the former voyage came on board, and I appointed them consignees of the vessel and cargo. I showed them the manifesto and bills of lading endorsed, which they regarded as constituting full right and title to the cargo. I then directed that the cotton should in the meantime be landed at the yard below the town, where the last cargo had been landed.

When the cotton was all landed, I explained to the consignees —Messrs. G.—my agreement with Mr. R. M. in Havana, and the subsequent action of Messrs. R. and D. G. M. in Texas, and as I had got the whole cargo of cotton into my possession,

I might retain possession of it until they had properly accounted to me for the proceeds of the inward cargo, but on thinking over the matter I had resolved not to take any undue advantage, but abide strictly by the agreement made with Mr. R. M. in Havana.

The Messrs. G. were much pleased at what they called my magnanimity in the matter, and said they had no doubt but Mr. R. M. would fully appreciate my action.

I then handed them Messrs. R. and D. G. M.'s letter of August 6th, in which it was stated that one half of the cotton belonged to them, and gave them directions for the disposal of it.

The cotton was then divided into two lots, each bale weighed and placed to each lot alternately. Messrs. G. then took over the half belonging to Messrs. R. and D. G. M., my half to remain at the yard until further arrangement.

The trip being now completed the crew were paid off, each receiving his bonus. They were told that the vessel would sail in a few days for Havana, and they might all reship within that time if they wished.

Some expressed their desire to ship at once, which I agreed to, as plenty of work was to be done in the way of overhaul and repairs to rigging, &c.

Tampico was still occupied by the French, and business went on as usual; but the French troops were being gradually withdrawn, and their places taken by Mexican troops in the service of the Emperor Maximilian, but I rather imagined the zeal and enthusiasm in favour of Maximilian was not so great as we had witnessed when here last voyage.

For some time after our arrival the weather had continued somewhat stormy, and there was something like a dearth of provisions in the place.

The storm which we had encountered the day before we got in, although it had not extended south of Tampico river, had extended far into the interior of Northern Mexico accompanied by heavy rains and disastrous floods. Roads were destroyed and bridges swept away and the communication between Tampico and the interior was interrupted, so that produce from the country could not reach the town. This was said to

be owing to the heavy floods, but some whispered that it was owing to the forces of President Juarez, which were said to be in greater force and nearer to Tampico than the French commanders in the district were willing to admit.

Transports had been sent by General Bazaine from Vera Cruz with provisions for the troops and inhabitants, but the weather being stormy there was great difficulty in getting the provisions landed across the bar. There were but few lighters at the place and those of a poor class, and the pilots declared it to be impossible for them to cross the bar in such weather, and the transports had to lay in the offing or stand out to sea with their cargoes on board.

This led to considerable friction between the French military commanders and the Mexican civil authorities. The former seemed to think that the danger apprehended by the pilots was greatly exaggerated, and implied a lack of zeal, and hinted that the want of will barred the way. While the civil authorities supported the pilots in their view of the matter.

Hints were thrown out in quiet corners that there might be more significance in the question than was at first observable. It might be questionable whether the civil authorities were so loyal to Maximilian as they pretended to be, and did not regard with favour the presence of the French troops, and would not have objected to see them starved out of the place. However, it behoved outsiders to make no remarks on the subject, as my mate found out rather to his inconvenience.

This happened in a very simple way.

It seemed he had been in a café where there were some of the bar pilots, as well as some French soldiers, and as the scarcity of provisions was beginning to be severely felt, many questions were asked of the pilots as to when they thought the bar would be sufficiently smooth to enable lighters to go out and bring in provisions from the transports.

The mate who was in high spirits, and perhaps a little exhilarated, made some remarks and began to boast about how the *Rob Roy* had crossed the bar in a far worse sea than any that had been for the last two weeks and without a pilot.

His remarks greatly annoyed the pilots, who declared that

it was because the captain of the *Rob Roy* was not a seaman, and did not know his duty, or he would never have attempted to cross in such a sea without a pilot.

The mate maintained that it was the means, and the only means, of saving the vessel and the lives of all on board.

The pilots admitted that it might have been the means of saving the vessel and the men's lives, but still maintained that to cross the bar in such a sea without a pilot, was not seamanship, but a reckless undertaking and a breach of the port regulations.

The mate, who was a little excited, began to laugh, and deride the pilots and the absurdity of their red-tape regulations. The French soldiers, on understanding the matter, took part with the mate, and joined in the altercation. High words arose and a general row got up which resulted in the mate being taken to the lock-up.

On learning of the matter I got our consignee to wait upon the alcalde, and on his explaining that it was only a bit of sailor's harmless boasting, and not intended as any allusion to the delicate question, the mate was set free, with a warning to be more careful in his remarks.

Singularly enough, just at this time a small steamer arrived from Cork, in Ireland, where she had been built to the order of the Maximilian Government expressly for work on the bar at Tampico. She was in the form of a paddle tow-boat, very strongly built, of light draught of water, and the paddle-wheels so constructed that they would touch the bottom at the same time as the keel, and so act as wheels in assisting the vessel over a shoal. How this vessel succeeded I do not know, as I do not remember having seen her at work on any of my subsequent visits to Tampico.

When she arrived she crossed the bar, and went up to the town of Tampico.

It was thought then that all the difficulties regarding lighterage over the bar would now be overcome; but not so. Regulations and red tape stood in the way. The civil authorities solemnly asserted that "the vessel was not 'born' in Mexico, and that she could not act as a lighter until she had become a citizen of Mexico."



The vessel was of course still under the British flag, and, according to the laws of Mexico, she must be matriculated and put under the Mexican flag before she could act as a lighter. To have this ceremony performed it was necessary that she should go to Vera Cruz as at the port of Tampico there was not the proper authority to change her flag.

The captain who brought her out from Cork, and who was an Irishman, said he had done his part in bringing her to Tampico, and that he was not going to Vera Cruz, or on any other cruz; he had had cruising enough in her. Besides, she had not sufficient coal left to take her to Vera Cruz and back, and no coal was to be had at Tampico at the time.

The commander of the French troops suggested that as a matter of necessity the rules be dispensed with, and that she should be sent off to the fleet of transports to bring in provisions at once.

The civil authorities, however, most emphatically refused to commit such a flagrant violation of the law, and the correspondence between the French commander and the civil authorities became hot and heavy.

Since our arrival I had made the acquaintance of a New Orleans gentleman, who was a proficient linguist, and was often employed as an interpreter, and was employed by the French commander to translate his letters to the civil authorities from French into Spanish.

This gentleman showed me extracts from a letter translated by him, which had been addressed by the commander of the French troops to the chief of the Mexican civil authorities. This letter I thought something of a curiosity in its way. It was couched in a degree of courtesy and politeness which could scarcely be attained in any other language, and which lost some of its force in being translated. It was in regard to sending off the steamer to the transports for provisions, and was something after the following style:

"Knowing and respecting your unsullied honour and high sense of duty, as also your justice and generosity, I appeal to you in the name of humanity on behalf of those sufferers, and as a matter of urgent necessity I humbly implore, &c., &c.

"Knowing also the wants of the men under my command,

and the necessities of the general population, and impelled by the duty I owe to them and to my superiors, I do, in the name of His Imperial Majesty, and by virtue of the force at my command, expressly command you to dispense for the time with the usual legal formalities, and direct," &c., &c.

How this matter was arranged I do not know, as we sailed a day or two afterwards.

As I had to provision the vessel for the trip up to Havana, I feared I might have some difficulty in obtaining the necessary stores owing to the scarcity of provisions; but meeting with my old friend Captain Currie, whose acquaintance I had made on my last voyage, he said these reports of the scarcity of provisions were greatly exaggerated, and that he could easily get for me at a certain store all that I wished, and I gave him a list of what I required.

I was a little undecided about what I should do with our share of the cargo of cotton. I knew it was of much more value at Havana than at Tampico, owing to the difficulty of shipment from the latter port, but there would be considerable risk in taking it to Havana in the vessel, as there were now a great many cruisers in the Gulf, and the *Rob Roy* being "habit and repute" a blockade runner, would, if over-hauled, be seized beyond question, and as cotton was now commanding a very high price, I was unwilling to expose it to further risk.

It was necessary, however, that we should have something in the way of ballast, and as no frieght was to be had, and it would be very difficult and expensive to get ballast, I resolved to put profit and risk together and take a small part of the cotton, as on last trip.

I therefore re-shipped on new bills of lading twenty-five bales of the most inferior cotton, and gave directions for the remainder —which was of high class—to be shipped to Liverpool on the mail steamer, leaving it to the Messrs. G. to consign it to whatever firm they thought best.

I must here admit that at that time I was quite unaware of how little knowledge I possessed of what was called "business" in transactions connected with blockade running.

All my crew again joined the vessel; we got our clearance conformable to law.



About two days before we sailed our old friend Father Ryan came on board, to see if we would give him a passage to Havana. He said since he had come to Tampico that the mail steamer had called, but the sea was so rough on the bar that no passengers could get off to the steamer, and it might be the same next time when the steamer touched.

I asked him if he had not had enough of the *Rob Roy* and undergone sufficient dangers and discomforts upon her.

He said that the hand of Providence had guided us before, and he believed it would be with us still; besides, he said he had conceived a sort of liking for the little vessel.

I said he was not very fastidious, and agreed to take him. We had also another passenger who had failed to get away by the mail steamer.

The boat came alongside with the stores, and Captain Currie with it to say good-bye to us.

Among the stores were two barrels of salt beef and one of pork; on the heads of each I observed the brand, "Condemned U. S. Stores." I got angry and ordered them to be sent back saying, "What do they mean, by sending me stuff such as that, old condemned United States stores, and charging such a high price?"

Captain Currie gave a loud laugh, and said, "Why W., I thought you was something of a military man. And is that all you know about condemned army stores?"

I then remembered something of what commissariat officers got the name of doing, but said that in case this might be an honest transaction, we had better open the barrels and examine the contents. The barrels were opened, and both beef and pork were found to be of the finest quality.

As any reader might think this matter somewhat enigmatical, I may say that commissaries sometimes got the name of getting the best army stores branded as condemned stores, and then auctioned off for a mere trifle, while they themselves bought them in through an accomplice. It was therefore a common thing for packages branded as "condemned" to contain provisions of the best quality. But as I have referred to this in a former work,* I need not here go into a lengthened explanation of how it is done.

* "Life in the Confederate Army," chap. xv.

All being now ready, we dropped down to the mouth of the river and waited for a chance of smooth water to get out over the bar, which we were fortunate to get on the following day.

As I had learnt that several schooners had lately been captured off the Yucatan coast on the upward run from Mexico to Havana, and these coasts were now pretty closely watched by the United States cruisers, I determined to take a different route this time. I accordingly stood away upon an E.N.E. course, intending to keep as near the middle of the Gulf as possible, where there would be less chance of meeting with cruisers. The winds were light, and we made slow but steady progress without meeting with anything.

We had been about five days out and the wind had almost died away when one day as we were down at dinner the watch on deck cried down that a heavy squall was coming. I hurried on deck, but the squall was upon us. All hands were set to shorten sail, but before anything could be got in, the vessel was reeling along at a fearful rate. She stood up well, however, but the squall having taken us unawares there was some hurry and bustle in getting the sail off her. In the midst of the confusion Father Ryan was very busy running to and fro offering his services. He generally followed his friend Hagan, offering his assistance, but on the whole very much in the way, and I feared the old man might get knocked over and hurt. But Hagan who was up to every seaman's dodge, adopted one which I had heard of before but never saw put into practice.

Calling Father Ryan to him, he gave him hold of a rope and said, "You hold on to that with all your might and be ready to haul when I tell you."

The old man with great willingness held on to the rope, and the rope held him (safe from danger) until sail was shortened and everything got right.

"Haul, now, Father Ryan!" cried Hagan, going to assist him. "That will do. Belay every bit," as he belayed the end of the rope on a belaying pin.

Of course the rope was a fixture and no part of the running gear, but it kept the old gentleman out of harm's way, and he was quite happy in the imagination that he had been of some service.

I have sometimes thought that a similar plan might be adopted with some busy but well-meaning people, who often, with good intentions, put themselves in the way in trying to remedy matters which they know nothing about.

The squall soon passed off, but it was evident that it was the forerunner of a heavier gale, which soon afterwards came upon us from the north-east, and about midnight went round to the north-west, and blew with great fury.

I was very wishful to try if the vessel would lay to in a gale and had her hove to on the port tack. Having only twenty-five bales of cotton on board, and drawing only about three feet of water above the centre-board, she was tossed about like a bandbox, and when the sea got high she seemed to be blown bodily from the tops of the waves into the trough of the sea.

The following day the gale continued with a very high sea, and fearing damage to the rudder, which in these flat vessels is very broad, and being well to windward of our course and the Yucatan channel open on our lee, we put the vessel before the wind, took up the centre-board about two-thirds, and carried just sufficient sail to keep her clear of the seas and she went along very easily without wetting her decks.

This gale—though not to be compared in violence with the one we encountered on the passage from Galveston to Tampico—lasted about five days, and during the whole of that time there was never a glimpse of the sun, and the atmosphere was so thick that we could not see a hundred yards from the vessel.

The gale at length abated, and soon died away altogether, and the sun came out clear, and a fine breeze set in from the south. On getting an observation I found that we were about forty miles north-west of Cape Antonia. All sail was set, and the breeze continuing, in three days more we arrived at Havana.

CHAPTER XVII.

The new custom house at Havana—Singular story of the building—Mr. R. M. ignores the action of the house in Texas—He prevails on me to make another trip—Great excitement in blockade running—Steamers *versus* sailing vessels—Their respective merits compared—Havana and its institutions—Officials—Pensioners—Poor—Criminals—Lotteries—Captain Flagg and the Bilateria—Jim Hyland turns up—His wife desires to be present when he is paid off—Loaded for another voyage.

AS soon as we passed the Moro and entered Havana harbour, there was the usual rush of boats crowding round the vessel; but as we had been here before, we knew better how to deal with that class, and kept them at bay.

Having got anchored, I went ashore and called upon Messrs. A., my former consignees, and reported the vessel and cargo consigned to them.

On going with them to get the vessel entered at the custom house, I found that that department had been transferred to a different place from where it had been last time we had been to Havana, and on going to the place, there was some pleasant remarks about our being one of the first entries at the "new custom house."

Though called the new custom house, it was by no means a new building, but a very old building, which covered a large space fronting on the harbour, in the finest and best business part of the town, which had for many years been closely shut up, and all access to it denied. The only accounts I had had about it were from sailors, who, on my inquiries why such a valuable part of the city should be thus darkly walled up, said that it was in there that the dragon, that old sarpent, was bound up.

The more correct account which I now got about it was this.

Some three hundred years ago, when Spain held dominion over the greater part of the New World, and the city of Havana was rising up as a central station and key to these possessions, a magnificent cathedral was erected, fronting the sea, inside of the beautiful bay which now forms the harbour,

and just about the centre of the front of the walled city. This cathedral was said to be the finest in the New World, and was held in great veneration.

When the Moro Castle and the other defences of Havana were taken by the British, after a gallant resistance in 1762, the British landed a force at Havana, a part of which was cavalry, and without any regard for the sacredness of the edifice, they used the cathedral as a stable for their horses. When Havana was restored to Spain by the treaty of peace, signed at Paris in 1763, this cathedral, in consequence of the sacrilegious use to which it had been put by the British, was declared to be defiled and desecrated, and entrance to it strictly forbidden, and it was condemned to be closely shut up in darkness for a period of one hundred years. The hundred years had now expired, and the building had been opened, but never again to be used as a place of worship, and it was being converted into a custom house and other secular purposes.

It was amazing to see the good state of preservation the building was in; the walls had been most substantially built, and still seemed as good as when first erected, while the timber, which was of mahogany and other fine hard wood of the country, was sound as the day it was put in.

Having got the vessel entered, and got a permission to discharge, a lighter was alongside the same night, and the cotton discharged into it. The vessel was reported as usual at the British Consulate, and the register and crew list deposited.

The crew having been paid off at Tampico, and having reshipped for the run to Havana, they had now to be paid for that run, under the supervision of the consul at Havana. They were paid off on the following day, but one name on the list remained unsigned, and the man not accounted for. This was the man Jim Hyland, who had been left behind in Texas, sick with yellow fever.

Having now got everything connected with the voyage completed, I went to Mr. R. M. and reported the voyage successfully completed, handed him certificate of the delivery of his half of the cargo of cotton to Messrs. G. of Tampico, and laid before him an account of the disbursements.

I then recalled to him his agreement with me, that the

cargo he would put on board would be more than sufficient to purchase a cargo of cotton, and asked if he still adhered to it.

He said he still adhered to it, and why did I ask.

I showed him the letter of Messrs. R. and D. G. M. in Texas, and that we should now settle up and dissolve partnership.

He appeared to be amazed, said he had no advices from the house in Texas; but there was evidently some mistake; but I must pay no attention to that, it was him that I had to deal with and not the house in Texas. He had heard of our arrival in Tampico, and had another cargo all prepared and ready; and as this was now the most favourable time of the year, good winds, dark weather, and short daylight, I should not lose a moment, but start upon another trip which I might accomplish in a few weeks.

The agreement with me for the voyage just finished he allowed was just as I had said: when he made a bargain he held to it. The agreement for the voyage he now proposed would be the same continued, bearing in mind that, as the half of the vessel now belonged to him, that I must pay for half of the cargo to be sent to Texas.

I acknowledged that the half of the vessel now belonged to him, but I wished to dissolve the partnership, and I wished he would say what he would give me for my half of the vessel or take for his half. I would give him until to-morrow to say whether he would buy or sell. I was quite aware that it was a favourable time of the year to make a voyage, and I was ready and wishful to start on one; but I most emphatically refused to go on another voyage consigned to the house of R. and D. G. M. So saying I took my leave, saying that I would call to-morrow and hear what he had to say.

On the following day I called and asked if he had made up his mind. He said if I was determined to dissolve the partnership, he would pay me a premium of fifty dollars to say what I would give or take for half of the vessel. I replied by saying that I would pay him one hundred dollars to say what he would give or take.

He then assumed another tone, and entered upon a long

discourse in which he used a large quantity of that seductive thing, flattery.

He began by saying that by taking the position we had done we would never come to any settlement, that the vessel would lie idle, and means be wasted; and that surely it would be great foolishness if a vessel so valuable as the *Rob Roy* for the present crisis, and a man possessing such qualifications to manage her as myself, should lie idle at this most advantageous season of the year, when everything was in favour of making a quick and successful voyage.

He could say nothing about the disposal of the last cargo taken into Texas until he got advices and statements of the transactions, but he would stand by the agreement he had made with me. He would now make a proposal, and he would advise me to consider it. He would show me invoices of a cargo which he had all ready, and which consisted of goods which, he had been informed by Mr. Helm, were especially wanted in Texas, and if I approved of the goods and the prices I should pay him half of the amount of the cargo, and then we would go equal shares in the voyage, and as I declined to consign to the house of R. and D. G. M., we could arrange to consign to some other firm.

This proposal did not seem to me to be much out of the way, and I said I would consider it if he would agree to consign to Mr. H. in Galveston, as I said it would save the great trouble and loss of time in taking the vessel up to Houston.

He did not seem to wish to consign to Mr. H., with whom he was not very friendly, although I did not at the time know for what cause. We, however, at length agreed to consign to a Mr. C. in Galveston.

I then looked over the invoices of the cargo he proposed to send, and though I did not know much of what the prices should be, I agreed to it. Remembering my promise to the Texas farmers, I requested that about thirty or forty barrels of seed potatoes should be included. To this he agreed. He also said that Mr. Helm would also wish to send some goods, which I said I would be willing to take free of freight.

He asked how soon would I be ready to sail, and if the vessel wanted any repairs. I said she must be put on the

ways, have her bottom cleaned and painted, and some other slight repairs; she must also have a new foresail, and I would be ready to sail in about two weeks, which would be about the beginning of December. This being arranged, I proceeded to get the vessel docked and fitted out ready for another trip.

Blockade running was now being carried on with great spirit; cotton had gone up to a very high price. All the Atlantic ports of the Confederate States, having either been captured or closely invested, the trade was now changed to the Gulf States, with Havana as a base, and a great many steamers which had formerly run from Nassau, New Providence, into Charleston, Savannah, Wilmington, and other ports on the Atlantic coast, had come to Havana, and as Mobile was now in possession of the Federals, their attention was turned to Galveston, which was now the chief available port for blockade-running enterprise.

Most of those steamers were swift paddle boats of light draught of water, mostly built on the Clyde, and purchased for this trade on account of their high speed; but there was now some difference of opinion as to whether they were more safe and profitable than schooners.

Their original cost was high so that there was always a large amount of capital at risk.

They consumed a large amount of coal, and as this article was not to be had within the Confederate States, they had to take in sufficient coal at Havana for the round trip, and as coal was dear at Havana, this added greatly to the expense of the voyage. Their carrying capacity was small, and this was still more hampered by the large amount of coal they had to carry, and when loaded down with coal and cargo their speed was greatly impaired.

The number of hands they had to carry in the capacity of engineers and stokers made their disbursements high in the way of wages and bonuses.

They could make the trip in a short time, and were not, like sailing vessels, subject to detention from contrary or light winds or calms, but they could be observed at a long distance on account of their smoke; and their speed was generally impeded by their being deep loaded; while the



Federal Government was now getting faster cruisers on the stations, and if they were sighted and chased they were often captured, or escaped only by throwing their cargo overboard.

The only classes of vessels which engaged in this traffic were steamers, and light-draught schooners, the former depending entirely on their speed, the latter depending upon their strategy by dodging the cruisers and keeping out of sight. Some confided in the one, and some confided in the other.

Mr. R. M. confided in schooners, and tried to become shareholder in as many as he could, and he generally contrived to become shareholder on pretty easy terms, the owners and masters of these vessels being generally a poorer class of adventurers, who often required some backing, and were generally men more capable of contending with the seas and enemies than holding their own with shrewd and sometimes not over scrupulous men of business.

Having now arranged for another trip, I set about getting the necessary repairs done; but as everything in Havana moved slow and sure, some time was necessary.

While the repairs were being done, I had an opportunity of observing something of the city and its institutions and general government, which were confirmed by subsequent sojourns. What seemed to me most worthy of note was their appointment of officials, their mode of dealing with their criminals, with their pensioners, and with their poor, also their modes of collecting revenue.

All officials from the Captain-General to the common policeman were natives of Spain; no appointments of any kind were given to natives of the island. This caused great dissatisfaction among the Creoles, and was the principal cause of the rebellion which broke out in 1869. But I have often thought that most of the smaller offices were not worth fighting about, as they were very poorly paid, and bribery was expected, and corruption common, particularly in the customs department.

Their mode of dealing with criminals was by making them work in a chain gang, in classes of more or less severity, according to the nature of the criminal. The streets of the city were swept, and all sanitary labour done during the

night by those gangs, and much of the Government work, including the making and maintaining of roads.

Pensioners got petty offices about the customs and other departments. Those of the navy got licenses to act as boatmen in the harbour, their scale of charges were strictly laid down, and no others were allowed to ply for hire.

The most helpless of the poor were allowed to beg one day in the week, which was Saturday. They had their own particular stations allotted to them, generally on the steps of church doors, or corners of the streets or squares, and there they must appear clean in their persons, keep in their places, be respectful to passers-by, and never importune, and certain it was that, by maintaining a respectful demeanour, they did not beg in vain.

One old woman, whom I passed occasionally, throwing her my mite, told me that she had held that station for eleven years, and during that time her average receipts amounted to about six dollars each Saturday, and since the blockade running had commenced, it had gone up to double that sum. She had, she said, a great regard for blockade runners, they had been very kind to her, and she prayed for their success.

Another class of more able-bodied poor got licenses to act as Bilaterias, that is, to sell lottery tickets. This was one of the methods adopted by the Government of raising revenue.

Cuba is said to be the richest jewel in the crown of Spain, and it is certainly a high contributor to her exchequer. The export and import duties are very high, and these being extensive, the revenue to the Spanish Government is very great. But what attracts most the attention of a stranger is the method of raising revenue by means of a lottery.

The Havana lottery is well known over a large part of the world, and is perhaps the most important and best-regulated lottery in existence. It is entirely under the control and management of the Government, and is conducted on a perfectly upright and honest principle. The Government, however, like many other agencies, deduct a very large commission for their trouble.

The system is—or was at that time—for the Government to issue tickets to the amount of 500,000 dollars. These tickets

each bore a number, and were in the form of coupons, and could be divided into sixteen parts, each part having the number upon it. The price of a full ticket was an ounce of gold, which was in Cuba valued at seventeen dollars. But as the ticket could be divided into sixteen parts, a sixteenth part of a ticket was sold for one dollar and twelve and a half cents.

They awarded prizes, which to the best of my recollection were, one prize of 100,000 dollars; one prize of 50,000 dollars; five prizes of 20,000 dollars; ten prizes of 5,000 dollars; and twenty-five of 2,000 dollars; amounting in all to 350,000 dollars. It will, therefore, be seen that the Government had, on each drawing, a profit of 150,000 dollars less expenses. This went towards the revenue. The drawings were monthly. The Government themselves became the holders of all tickets or parts of tickets not sold, and of course acquired what prizes fell to them. This, however, seldom happened, as the tickets were generally all sold some time before the day of drawing, and the tickets out and selling for the following month, and it often happened during the time of blockade running that special drawings had to be made to meet the demands.

This lottery was very popular in Havana, and to have discontinued it would have caused great dissatisfaction. The poorest families would take their sixteenth of a ticket, attaching great importance to some particular number. Others, according to their means and station in life, took eighths, fourths, or halves of tickets, each portion of a ticket entitling the holder to that proportion of the prize. Many of the wealthy merchants took regularly every month a full ticket, the lottery having a page in their ledger. On the debit side entered cash paid for tickets, and on the credit side prizes drawn; some few having a balance on the right side, but many more having balances on the wrong side. It was, however, a way of paying their taxes, and the chances of a prize afforded a little pleasing excitement, while the poorer classes regarded it as their just taxation, and they always had before them a hope that some day they might rise to affluence. Certain lands and properties were looked out to be bought, certain businesses were to be commenced, old homes in Spain

were to be visited, and many other objects to be attained "when I draw in the lottery;" and of course every month, the fame spread around of a stroke of fortune to some one.

It was also the means of providing employment for a large portion of their deserving poor as Bilaterias or ticket sellers, as already referred to. These Bilaterias must be known to be really poor, deserving, and well behaved. When they get the appointment they are provided with a brass plate, inscribed Bilaterias No ——, this was their license. They were restricted to a certain beat—a street, or part of a street or square—where they must appear perfectly clean and well dressed, and their brass-plate on their breast shining like a mirror; they may cry out their numbers, but always be respectful and civil, and never importune. A great many were employed in this way at Havana, and other places in the island.

I may here say that what has led me into this description of the Havana lottery and the Bilaterias was a little incident, which, by a freak of fortune, happened with one of them and a friend of mine, and as it is not unlike some of the pretty stories which we read in novels, I may relate the incident just as it happened.

During the time I had been in Texas on the last trip, I made the acquaintance of a young man named Flagg. He was a native of Texas, and previous to the war had been a seaman, and had got as high as mate, and had been mostly employed in cotton-carrying ships from New Orleans and Galveston to Liverpool, Havre, and other ports in Europe.

When the war broke out this occupation was gone, and he had got a detail into the Confederate States Navy, at the port of Galveston; but as this was rather too inactive a life for him, he applied for permission to engage in the more active calling of blockade running, and got a detail into what was called the "Mercantile Marine" service; and, willing to accept anything to give him a start, he had taken command of Captain McLusky's old vessel, and succeeded in running her out with a load of cotton, and got safe into Tampico, where he had arrived about two days after we had sailed for Havana. This being all that was desired of that craft, he came up by mail steamer

to Havana with letters from owners to take command of some vessel there.

Being a stranger in Havana, and learning that the *Rob Roy* had arrived, he sought her out and came on board. As I by this time had got a little acquainted in Havana, and knew something of the language, I agreed to aid him a little in the object he wished to obtain.

Captain Flagg, or Bill Flagg as he was familiarly called, was a man of some culture, although he had a good deal of the manner of the better class of seamen of the old school, a little rollicking, but by no means a drunkard, a little quick of temper, but possessing much of that open generosity and kind-heartedness common in sailors. I went with him to see the parties he wished to call upon, but he did not get his business arranged so satisfactorily as he expected. Several parties were to be connected in the adventure, and it was the old story, each one desirous to get the profits without running much risk, and he was bandied about from one to another for some time before they could come to any arrangement, and he was beginning to lose his patience.

We had been calling on one of these parties, expecting the business to be finally arranged, but to his disappointment it was not so, and he must still get some document signed by some other party; and he was hastening away in very bad humour, when just at the door he was met by one of those Bilaterias shouting some lucky number, and holding out his tickets for sale.

"Out of the way, confound you," cried Bill, giving the man a push and brushing past him.

The poor old man said nothing, but looked exceedingly hurt, while Bill went straight to the office of the person he was to see, and, finding him, got the matter arranged at last.

Bill's fit of bad temper had now passed off, and, as we came out to the street, I said, in a half-joking way, "Bill, that was rather too bad of you to rudely push that poor old Bilateria. These are decent old people, and exceedingly poor, and make but a small pittance. I saw he felt much hurt, yet he never uttered a word. I think you should go back and apologise to him."

"Oh, well," said he, "he came in my way when I was in a hurry, but I am sorry for it; and, if you like, I will go and apologise to the poor devil, and give him half a dollar."

"I think," said I, "you might please him better by explaining the matter, and buying a ticket from him."

"All right, let us go and see him."

Bill, the kindest soul imaginable, would have bought a whole ticket, but I told him that a sixteenth, or at most an eighth, would be sufficient.

We went to the old man's beat, which was on "Calle Mercaderes," and found him. I tried to explain, in a mixture of English and Spanish, how my friend was in a hurry at the time, and a little irritated, and he now wished to apologise for his rudeness, and would also buy a ticket.

The old man was exceedingly gratified, took off his hat, with many "gracias," talked of the generosity of Americanos, which I explained to Bill with some little additions, and it ended in Bill buying a half ticket, or rather two quarters, of different numbers, the old man assuring him that he would be certain to draw a prize, as he would put a benediction on the numbers. Bill put the tickets in his pocket-book, and soon forgot all about the matter.

A few days afterwards, I was sitting with Bill and one or two others in the "Café Dominica," when a Bilateria entered selling papers containing a list of the winning numbers of the lottery which had been drawn that day. Lists were being eagerly bought, and as eagerly scanned over with many looks of disappointment, when Bill happened to recollect that he had two tickets, and, in a joking way, called the man over to him, and bought one of the lists, just by way of amusement, to see how far he had been from a winning number. He looked over the list, and then, suddenly starting up, pulled out his pocket-book and took out his tickets, and there sure enough, opposite the number of one of his tickets, was a prize of 2,000 dollars. Bill would scarcely believe it for some time, but was assured by some of the bystanders that it was quite correct he was a winner; his was a quarter ticket, and he would be entitled to 500 dollars.

"But I suppose," said he, "it will cost me more trouble to get the money than it is all worth."

"Not at all," was the reply. "That ticket is as good as a bank-note. Go and see Mr. Dominica, the owner of the café."

Mr. Dominica, who spoke English, looked at the ticket and then at the list, and said he would cash it for a dollar.

"Done," said Bill; and, as quick, Dominica took the ticket and paid him 499 dollars.

Bill was quite elated, and insisted on treating every one in the café, which he did. I saw that he was very soon going to have plenty of friends, and, from his kind and genial disposition, the money would soon go. I said to him, in a jocular way, that I thought he ought to remember the poor Bilateria, who had been the cause of him getting the money.

"I be hanged if I don't," said he. "Where is the poor devil?" And we went straight to the old man's beat.

Bill, in the happiest mood, heartily shook hands with the old man, and handed him two ounces of gold, at which the old man, somewhat astonished and overwhelmed with gratitude, bowed almost to the ground, and, after making many "gracias," said, as near as I could make out, "that he sometimes from his own countrymen got a dollar when a ticket which he had sold to them drew a prize, but it took an Americano to be really generous." However that might be, perhaps those two ounces were spent in as good a way as any other part of Bill's prize, as, like much of the money which was passing hands at that time, it came quick and was soon gone.

I had now got my vessel off the ways, and she lay at the wharf, at the Regles on the opposite side of the harbour, getting her cargo on board.

Two steamers had arrived from Galveston with cargoes of cotton, but a third, which had left about the same time, had been captured.

I had got my old crew shipped again with the exception of two—one Fred, the Swede, who acted as cook and steward, who had carefully saved up his wages and bonuses, and now shipped on a vessel for Sweden, his native country, where he intended to retire from sea and open a restaurant; the other, who had only been with me one trip, on being paid off

invested largely in lottery tickets, and was fortunate—or perhaps I might say unfortunate—in drawing a prize of considerable amount, with which he purchased a share in a blockade-running schooner, and sailed in her for Texas, and was captured when three days out, and he lost everything.

While we were lying at the wharf, I had observed a woman, apparently an Irish woman, hanging about the wharf, as if she was keeping an eye on the vessel, and sometimes talking with the men. This was nothing unusual, but I noticed that every time I crossed over to the city, she got on to the ferry-boat and followed me, although she seemed to try to avoid my notice. After crossing, she generally took her station near the British Consulate, which was close to the ferry landing, and waited there until I returned, when she invariably got on to the ferry-boat and followed me back, and again took her station on the wharf near the vessel. I began to notice this, and wondered if she was some sort of spy, and determined to know what she meant. I observed at times some of my men talking with her, and then talking and laughing among themselves, as if anticipating some amusement. On seeing this, I asked the mate what was the meaning of it, who the woman was, and what was her object in acting as she did. He said this was the wife of Jim Hyland, the man we had left behind in Texas. He had come over upon one of the steamers, and having been employed stowing the cargo and on the run over, he had been paid off, and had gone upon a spree and spent the money, and had given nothing to his wife; and as some balance was due to him on the *Rob Roy*, he was now watching an opportunity to come and get that; but his wife was determined to intercept him, and be present when he was paid, with a view of getting at least a part of the money before he would spend all of it in drink. As she knew that I must pay him either on board the vessel or at the office of the Consul, this was the reason why she kept watch over the vessel, and when I crossed to the city went and kept watch at the Consul's office, while he was hovering in the background trying to get an opportunity of coming to me to get his pay unknown to his wife. But she was too cute for him, and closely blockaded the vessel when I was on the Regles side of the harbour, and the Con-

sulate when I went over to the city. They had been playing this cat-and-mouse game for some days, to the great amusement of my crew, who expected to see a fine shindy when the payment was made, for she had sworn that she would have some of the money if she should tear every stitch of clothes off his back to get it.

I was much astonished to find that what I had considered such a quiet, hard-working man, and such an excellent stevedore, should have been so lost to himself, and wondering whether there might not be a pair of them, I asked what kind of woman she was. The mate said, that so far as he knew, she was a sober, hard-working woman. They had left New Orleans on account of the war, and came to live at Havana, where she supported herself and her children by doing washing for seamen; but she got but little help from her husband, who spent the most of his money in drink.

I told him to ask the woman to come on board. When she came on board, I told her of the great impropriety of loitering upon the wharf opposite the vessel, and following me as I passed back and forward to the city upon the ferry-boat, and asked what she meant by it.

She begged a thousand pardons, and entered upon a long story of her grievances, of her hard struggle to maintain herself and the "childers," and how her husband could make so much money, but would never give her a "blissed cent," but spend it all in drink; and the only money she had ever got from him since they had come to Havana, was when he got his advance when he sailed on this vessel now six months bygone, "and shure," said she, "I would never have fingered that, barring that I was standing by when your honour gave it to him here on this blissed deck."

I said I feared that I could not help her much, as I was compelled to pay the money to him, and get him to sign off on the crew list, but I would give her an opportunity of being present when I paid him, which would be either on board the vessel or at the Consul's office, but I did not want to have any disturbance at either place. I said there was not a great deal due to him, and, counting up the balance due, I found it to be 22 dollars. I told her, however, that I had intended to pay

him a gratuity, for the great use he had been to me in stowing the cargo in Texas. This I was not bound to pay him, but as I had entered in the disbursements 17 dollars for this, I might pay that to her, as it was not on the articles. "But," said I, "what would be the use of paying it to you; he would just take it from you."

"You put the money in my hands, sor," said she, "and the sorro a grip he will get of it."

I told her to come on board with him on the afternoon of the following day. In the meantime I would see the Consul on the matter.

On the following morning I saw the Consul, and told him the man had turned up, and asked what I should do. He gave me the old crew list, and told me to pay the man on board, and get him to sign off, and then bring back the crew list to him, and that was all he had to do with the matter.

On the following day the woman came on board, but Jim did not come with her. He had got surrounded by a crowd of advisers in the shape of land-sharks and sea-lawyers, which had come to Havana to prey upon the seamen engaged in blockade running. They were quietly advising and explaining to him where he ought to be paid according to the laws of the port and the British articles, and also the amount he ought to receive, and they were ready, when he received it, to assist him in spending it. The rules of the port, however, were strict in regard to these gentry, and they had to keep quiet.

I sent the mate to tell Jim that I had got the crew list and instructions from the Consul, and the crew list must be closed as the vessel was about to sail, and that if he did not put in an appearance I should pay the money to his wife as his nearest of kin.

This threat, overdrawn as it was, had the desired effect. Jim came on board, a perfect wreck, but making great efforts to appear sober and look business-like, very different in appearance and manner from the man we had left in Texas, so that the crew began to laugh and jeer him, and ask who he was, and told him that they feared he would have to bring some one to identify him, as the captain would be sure to take him

for some impostor, and not the Jim Hyland whom we had left behind in Texas.

He came up with an air of importance, and handed me a large document, made up in a very formal way by some of his sea-lawyer friends, showing the amount due to him according to the "British articles."

I threw it aside, and produced the statement made at the Consulate; and, calling the mate for witness, I took the money in my hand, and gave him a pen, and told him to sign the crew list. He refused, and began to lay down the law.

"Oh, very well," said I to the mate. "Call in that woman there; she will soon take the money and sign."

"Oh, no, no," cried he, "I will sign it; it is all right." And he immediately became Jim Hyland again.

He signed the crew list with a somewhat shaky hand, and I told the mate to witness it. The mate in the meantime, bent on having some amusement, had taken me at my word, and called the woman from the wharf to come on board, which she did very quickly. The sight of his wife had a great effect upon Jim, and I saw that he felt very uneasy at her presence.

I then took him to task about the way he had been treating his wife, and said that I trusted he would now act right towards her, and give her at least an ounce (17 dollars), which she required to pay her rent, and, holding out the ounce gold-piece in my hand, I said, "Will I give her this?"

"No," said he, "you must pay it to me, and I will give it to her myself."

Of course I had to do this, but I must confess that I laid the way to give the woman a chance, and have a little fun over the matter. So I put the ounce piece in my pocket, and, calling the mate to witness, I counted out, on the roof of the cabin, the 22 dollars in quarter-ounce pieces and silver.

Jim, half blind with drink and his hand shaky, began to carefully count the money, examining every gold piece, and sounding it to see if it was good, when his wife, watching her chance, made a sudden grab, and, snatching up two of the gold pieces, made for the gangway.

One of the men, out of mischief, I suppose, barred the gangway, and the woman ran forward. Jim, leaving the rest of

the money on the deck, made after her, uttering wild imprecations, and calling upon her to give him his money; but she dodged round the fore-hatch with a defiant air, and, having got the money in her hand, she did not seem to be much afraid of her lord and master.

I watched the position of the two, and seeing the woman nearest to where the money was lying, I cried out, "Come, none of your shindies on board of this vessel. Here, take up this money, and get ashore out of this."

"And, faith, I will soon do that," she said. And, dashing aft, she nimbly picked up some more of the money, while Jim, scrambling with her, only succeeded in getting a dollar or two of the silver.

The men seemed to enjoy the fun greatly. They had been looking forward to something of the kind when Jim came to get his wages.

Some of Jim's pot-house friends were standing on the wharf waiting for a share of the prey, and were exasperated at seeing their booty thus lost, but they dared not make any demonstration. They knew too well the harbour police, and that they would make short work with them.

Jim now accused me of giving his wife an opportunity of taking his money, and said that I had done it on purpose. I said I had done it on purpose, and added that he ought to be ashamed of himself. He then reminded me of the gratuity I had promised him for stowing the vessel. I allowed I had promised him something; but that was not in the articles, and the Consul had nothing to do with it. Nevertheless, as I had charged it in the disbursements I would pay it, but not to him, but to his wife.

I then called the woman up, and asked her if she could sign her name. She said she could. I then wrote out a receipt for 17 dollars, and made her sign it, and I handed her the money, saying, "Now take care that he don't take it from you."

"Him!" said she—"the divil a fear of that!" as she ran ashore, and was soon out of sight.

Jim looked exceedingly sheepish, and his pot-house friends very much disappointed.

The cargo was now on board. It consisted mostly of heavy goods, and the vessel was deeper laden than last trip, it being now sought to send heavy goods by schooners, the steamers being too much loaded down with their own coal to take much heavy cargo.

I had about twenty-five tons of bar iron, an article greatly wanted in Texas, a large assortment of ironmongery, and several crates of earthenware, besides a quantity of general goods such as stationery, tea, coffee, and other groceries, and about forty barrels of potatoes for seed. For the Confederate Government I had about thirty bales of army blankets, tent cloth, and army clothing. It was said that one or two kegs of powder were packed in the heart of each bale, but that was not stated in the bills of lading, and I made no inquiries, and did not examine. There was also a lot of furnace bars for the transport steamers.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Third Voyage—Departure from Havana—A dead weight cargo—Heavy weather—A chase—Loss of a topmast—Get into Galveston during a norther.

HAVING got everything on board including the mails, a full crew shipped, the new foresail bent, and all ready for sea, I cleared for Matamoras, intending to strike straight across the Gulf. It was now the beginning of December, shorter daylight, and steady winds, and I aimed at making a quick run, and be less time exposed to risk, and not have to bear such a long period of suspense as on last inward trip. I had also got more accustomed to the business and become more bold and reckless.

Two United States gunboats lay in the harbour, but it was seldom they got up steam and followed a blockade runner, so we took no heed of them, but with a strong south-easterly wind blowing steadily we stood down the harbour and passed the Moro about three o'clock in the afternoon, the officers on the gunboats watching us steadily with their glasses, but as

neither vessel had steam up I knew that they could not overhaul us before dark.

In case, however, that they might watch the course we took, we stood to the westward until dark, and then set the course for the old place, thirty miles east of Galveston. So far as I understood, no particular precautions had been taken to watch this entrance; in fact, this eastern channel was so shallow that few vessels could or would attempt to enter that way, and the *Rob Roy* was about the lightest draught vessel which entered Galveston from Havana.

The wind continued to blow steadily and increased during the night, with a considerable sea, and I soon began to observe that although we had all our cargo under deck, she did not sail so sweet and easy as when cotton-loaded. The iron was a dead weight, and she jerked quick and did not roll so steadily or rise over the seas so easily, as when she had a deck-load of cotton; however, she was spinning along rapidly, though taking a good deal of water over her decks, and I was unwilling to shorten sail, as I was very wishful to get over to the Texas coast before we should meet a norther, as that would have been hard upon us loaded as we were.

The wind increased almost to a gale, and we were at last compelled to shorten sail and run under single reefs. Last trip we had too little wind; this trip we had too much.

There was nothing worthy of note, and we sighted nothing from the time we left Havana until the sixth day out, when we were nearing the coast of Texas. The weather was somewhat thick with rain squalls, wind about E.S.E., with a pretty high sea, when we sighted a vessel to the eastward upon our weather bow, about four miles distant. She seemed a schooner somewhat larger than ourselves, under a heavy press of canvas, and was running nearly before the wind, and as we were steering about N.W., we would cross her track.

The sight of another vessel is generally a pleasing incident at sea, in the ordinary course of things. It relieves the monotony, and sends forth a feeling of companionship; but it was not so on board of a blockade runner.

We desired no company and wished to see no vessel, and the sight of any vessel caused less or more uneasiness; and

there was the usual conjecture as to what she might be and how we should act.

We were tolerably certain that the United States had now no sailing vessels acting as cruisers in the Gulf, but she might be a prize with an armed crew on board, which would make a prize of us if they could, and we had not this trip any arms on board to make a show of resistance.

Seeing that we would cross her track about a mile ahead of her we kept on our course.

As the two vessels neared each other we could see that she was carrying every stitch of canvas she could bear; rather too much for the gale that was blowing, and she was evidently straining to the utmost for some object.

We had single reefs in the mainsail and foresail, which we immediately proceeded to shake out. By the time this was done we were crossing her track, and we would soon see whether she altered her course to stand after us. She kept on her course, however, and we were relieved in mind thus far.

One of the men supposed her to be the *Emma* which had sailed from Havana about two days before us, destination unknown, but she was a new vessel and this was supposed to be her first trip in blockade running.

Wondering why she was carrying sail to such a reckless degree, the idea at once suggested itself that she might be chased, although we had seen nothing astern of her, but the weather was thick so that we could not see far.

A man was sent to the mast-head to look in the direction, but before he was half way up a slight clearing of the weather showed a gunboat in the distance.

"Get the topmast staysail on her," I said.

"I am afraid she won't bear it," said the mate.

"We must try it," I said. "It all depends upon our speed for a short time; it is now past three o'clock. Yon gunboat is seven miles distant, it is near the shortest day, and it will be dark before six. If she can't gain more than two miles an hour upon us, we are all right."

"She bore the topmast staysail in a heavier gale than this," said Hagan, who was standing by; "the night we came out from Brazos River on the first trip."

"All right," said the mate, "let us set it."

The sail was set and it sent her along faster, but she plunged heavily into the seas and quivered violently, and I was a little uneasy, for it now recurred to my recollection that on the time referred to by Hagan, she was cotton-loaded, with a high deck-load, but now she had a dead weight of iron in her hold which made a disagreeable difference in a vessel of this kind.

In the meantime I watched the gunboat steadily to see whether she would continue her course after the other vessel, or take after us. She did not seem to be a very fast steamer, and I thought she was not gaining very much on the large schooner.

One of the new hands that we had shipped at Havana, named Charlie, was an old hand at blockade running, and had also been in the U.S. navy, and served in the blockading fleet. He said that the other schooner had taken the gunboat before the sea. The object in doing this was because these gunboats were generally short vessels, and when going before a heavy sea they pitched heavily, throwing their propeller out of water, causing the engines to race, and requiring constant throttling of the engines, which impeded their progress very much: and from the clouds of spray which even at this distance we could see at times, shot out from the stern of the gunboat, it was evident that she was at a great disadvantage by having to run before the wind and sea.

I began to fear that on this account she might leave off pursuit of the other schooner and follow us, and determined if she did, to run before the wind also.

She seemed to alter her course about a point towards us with the object, I thought, of keeping in the wake of both vessels, and taking after the one she thought she would be most likely to make sure of.

She was not, however, gaining rapidly on either, and in about an hour after we had sighted her, she seemed to be fully five miles distant, when a rain squall came up and hid her from view.

While looking at our pursuer, I had been neglecting my own vessel, and the rain squall struck us suddenly, and crack went the topmast, and the staysail was fluttering in the wind.

It was, however, got in safe and the wreck cleared away. This was a misfortune, but if the wind continued we could get along very well without the staysail, and while we were hid from the view of the gunboat, I thought it a good opportunity to alter our course, and now that the staysail was off her, she would sail faster by bringing her on the wind a little.

I altered her course to N.N.W. This put her on her best leg and took us off at more of an angle from the track of the gunboat, without the latter observing it.

The weather continued thick, and the gunboat was still hid from view, but we could hear now and then the whirr of her propeller as it was thrown out of water by her pitching. This, and the direction of the sound, showed to us that the gunboat was still keeping on the same course.

Just as it was getting dark the weather cleared off a little, and we could just see the gunboat about seven miles distant, bearing about south by west. We thought it probable she might not see us; we had altered our course, and our topmast and staysail being gone, we were less easy to be seen, and it got dark almost immediately after we saw her.

Although it continued to blow pretty hard all night we did not reef down as usual, as I feared that if the gunboat had seen us after the squall had passed, and the other schooner had escaped her, she would likely during the night stand towards the place where we would be likely to be, so that she might chance sight us at daylight.

Having had no observation for two days owing to the thick weather, I was not very sure of our position, but I knew that we must be getting near to the coast of Texas. About midnight, however, it became beautifully clear, and I got the latitude by an altitude of the polar star, which showed us to be about thirty-five miles from the coast, but as we had altered our course I expected that we would be to the eastward of the place we wished to make. However, as we should have to wait until night before attempting to run into Galveston, I determined to continue on the same course, and get up close to the land by daylight, where we would be more out of the track of cruisers.

We were now just in the track most frequented by them and

we kept a good look out. Although there was no moon, it was clear and starlight, and some of the men said that by this sudden clearing up after thick rainy weather, we might look out for a norther. As that would be off the land, it was another inducement to us to get close up and be under the lee of land if it did come.

About two hours before daylight we took a cast of the lead, and found 14 fathoms. This was just as we wanted. The wind had somewhat moderated, but still blew steady. At the first appearance of daylight we were on the look out, but nothing was to be seen. The coast was low and the land could not be seen at a great distance, but when it became clear daylight, the land could be seen about eight miles distant.

This was all very well so far, but now came the time of danger. We would have to remain here for the whole day, liable to be seen by any passing cruiser. We would have been glad if the thick rainy weather of yesterday had continued, but it did not; it had cleared off and the sun came out bright and warm.

I now got an altitude of the sun, and got the longitude. I found we were, as I expected, about eight miles to the eastward of the landmark of the three sand-mounds. We now stood to the westward, keeping a sharp look out from the mast-head and keeping as close to the shore as possible, but owing to the rough weather of the past few days there was a very heavy surf rolling up on the beach, and we could not now venture so close as we had done last trip, if a cruiser happened to pass.

The wind now began to lessen, and it was near noon before we got to our old anchorage opposite the three mounds, and soon afterwards it died away altogether. This enabled us to go a little closer in shore, but I was a little anxious for fear we should not have a steady breeze to run into Galveston during the night.

"I am much mistaken," said one of the old hands, "if we don't have wind enough before long."

"A norther do you mean?" said I.

"Yes," said he, "a norther will be on before night, or I am mistaken."

"All the better," said I. "We are all right for a norther

now, wind off the land with smooth water; I only wish it and night were here together."

"But how about getting up the main channel after we get into it. There is very little room for tacking with the centre-board down?"

This required consideration, and I thought it best to be prepared if the norther did come. The only plan I knew of was to warp up if the warp would be strong enough. In the meantime a sharp look out was kept from the mast-head, but nothing appeared in sight, and not a breath of wind.

About 3 p.m. the sun was obscured, and the air got a smoky appearance, and some gusts of wind came off the land.

I had, while in Havana this last time, bought a light kedge-anchor, and it was that which we had now down. The vessel was hove up to it, and the heavy anchor set go, and in half an hour the norther was on us with full force.

This added a little to the danger from cruisers, because, if a cruiser had been passing, she would probably have hugged the land closer to be in smooth water; however, it was now only two hours till dark, and all the rest was in our favour.

We could run in under close reefs, and therefore be less easily seen, while the cruisers riding at anchor would swing out to sea and have to pay out chain, so they would be farther off, and, as the wind was a little east of north, it was possible that we would be able to lay up the main channel the greater part of the way. However, we got the long line ready, and doubled it to use as a warp, and had the large boat ready to take out the kedge if necessary.

We then close-reefed the main and foresail, and put one reef in the jib, and, as we knew that the norther would be always lessening the water in the small channel, we determined to start early.

As soon as it was dark we raised anchor and stood along the coast. It was blowing pretty hard, but, as the wind was off the land, the water was smooth, and we kept well up to windward in rather less than the stipulated three fathoms, for although what little tide there was, was rising, still the strong wind off the land shoaled the water a little.

As we got near the entrance to the channel we could dis-

cover dimly in the distance the first of the blockading fleet. She was just about the same place as we had seen her on last trip, but riding to seaward of her anchor, which kept her a little farther off our course.

We must be careful and not get into the same *cul de sac* that we got into last trip, but I was reminded by old Charlie that I need not be surprised if we got into six feet of water, or even less, as the water would be sure to be very low on the bar in this wind. We soon found the entrance to the channel, and altered the course to W.S.W. It now required all hands, and the cook. There was barely six feet of water, the channel was narrow, and it was blowing furiously. We required to have a man taking soundings on both sides, and a good man at the helm.

On the first deepening of the water it was luff, quick, haul in sheets, and down centre-board.

She lay up the channel for a good stretch, but she was getting jambed on the western side of it. We put about, but we had scarcely gathered headway when we had to put about again, and we found that, owing to the strong wind, there was a strong current down the channel. We kept tacking, and gained a little, but the channel was getting narrower. At last we saw the light of the guard-boat, and, thinking we were safe from the blockading fleet, we dropped anchor. The noise of the chain running out was heard by those in the guard-boat, and they hailed us.

Owing to the howling of the wind, it was difficult to hear at that distance, but we understood that we were to come up to the guard-boat, as we were not safe where we lay.

To get up was no easy matter. The channel here was narrow, and a strong gale of wind was blowing right down. There was no room to tack, and, had we raised the anchor, we would have been blown out among the blockading fleet before we could have gathered headway on either tack. We must warp up; but the question was, would the warp-rope, doubled, be strong enough, and would the kedge hold? We must try it. We knew it was good holding ground, though soft.

We got up some of the furnace bars which we had as freight, and lashed them to the stock of the kedge to add to its weight;

we then got out the large boat, and, having got everything prepared, we started to pull up towards the guard-boat.

The water was smooth, but the wind blew so strong that, with four stout oarsmen, it was all we could do to make headway against it.

After a hard pull the boat got up a little past the guard-boat where the kedge, loaded with its additional weight, was let down; then hanging on to the warp, the boat dropped back to the schooner.

We hove gently on the warp until the anchor chain got slack; this satisfied us that the kedge was holding. We then hove up the anchor, and hung it by a stopper from the davit, ready to let go in a moment if the warp should break. We then hove on the warp as often as the wind lulled a little, but stopped heaving during the violent gusts.

After a great deal of hard labour, we got the schooner close up to the guard-boat, when the captain of the latter hailed us and said we might anchor there. We were quite safe from any attack by boats from the blockading fleet.

We dropped anchor with right good will, congratulating ourselves that we were in safe once more, although every one at the same time avowed that blockade running was no child's play.

Having made sure that the anchor was holding, we let the warp remain out also, and, setting an anchor watch, we turned in.

We had little communication with those on the guard-boat that night. It was blowing too hard for us to hear each other.

By daylight the wind had gone down a little, the nib of the norther, as it was called, had blown off, but it still blew a pretty hard gale.

About eight o'clock the boarding officers came on board, and we passed through the usual ceremony. It being midwinter, we had a clear bill of health from Havana. There had been several steamers got in within the last month or two, but we brought the latest news by ten days.

They took a list of our cargo, which was satisfactory, and much wanted, especially the army blankets, as the weather

was now cold, and we were ordered to come up to the town and get discharged as soon as possible, as the Quarter-master's Department was much in want of the goods. They took the mails, consisting of letters and newspapers, and having, as usual, taken a few samples of our stores, which they declared good, especially the liquors, they left, landing at the Forts.

We now got up anchor and stood up the bay, and anchored opposite the town about noon.

There were several steamers (blockade runners) lying at the wharf, and some of the Transport service steamers, so that we had to lay at anchor until we should be assigned a berth at the wharf.

CHAPTER XIX.

Shore business—Our new consignee, Mr. C.—Collision with a transport—Loss of our main-boom—Increase of business at Galveston—Difficulty of getting compressed cotton—Arrival of my friend Flagg—He plays a joke upon me—He makes amends for it—I wish to leave quickly—Load with uncompressed cotton—A small cargo—Clear for Vera Cruz.

AS soon as we were anchored, I went ashore and reported to the British Consul, and deposited with him the vessel's register and crew list. I then called upon Mr. C., and, having handed him the manifesto of the cargo, requested him to get the vessel entered at the custom house.

Mr. C had some connection or relationship with my partner in Brownsville, and I had seen him when we were in Texas on the first trip, and this was why I had proposed him as consignee when arranging with Mr. R. M. for this trip. He seemed a plain, quiet, honest man, but not a very extensive merchant, and had had very little to do with blockade-running, and had no great influence with the officials. He was, however, none the worse for this, at least as I thought from past experience, and I thought now that for what was required in that line I was learning to have a fair amount of cheek myself, although my cheek was not always governed by prudence and sound judgment.

He told me that Mr. P., my partner's representative, was not in Texas, but had gone to Havana on a steamer which had not arrived at Havana when we left. This, however, was not of much importance.

General Magruder was not in Galveston at the time, and the goods for the Confederate Government were to be delivered to the Post Quarter-master.

At the request of Mr. C. I called upon that gentleman, and he said, if I could deliver the goods at once, he would send a transport steamer alongside of the schooner to receive them as soon as a permit was got from the custom house. A permit to discharge was got the same evening, and next morning a transport steamer came alongside to receive the goods.

The norther was still blowing, and the steamer coming up from leeward, intending to cross our stern, by some clumsy handling fouled the end of our main-boom, and, after pushing us ahead for some distance, the boom snapped in the middle.

Commodore Smith, chief of the Marine Department, who was standing upon another steamer close by, after having sworn furiously at the pilot in charge of the transport for his carelessness, turned to me and said—

"Captain, you go to Captain ——, of the Transport service, and tell him to give you a spar out of the Transport shed to replace your main-boom. Tell him to give you one of the spars of the *Harriet Lane*."

I may here observe that the *Harriet Lane*, before being sent to Havana, had been dismantled, and her spars and rigging stowed away in the sheds of the Transport Department.

Having discharged the goods for the Confederate Government into the transport, we soon after got a berth at the wharf, where we discharged the rest of the cargo.

The state of things at Galveston was now very different from what they were when we came in last trip. We were then the first vessel that had entered the port for months, and our arrival caused considerable excitement, and we were to a little extent lionized; but now it was quite different. Several steamers had lately arrived, and our arrival was scarcely noticed. All the better, I thought. To get loaded and slip away quietly is the most profitable, but I soon found that to

get loaded was not going to be an easy matter. Some four or five steamers were laying there waiting for cargoes, and all wanted to get compressed cotton.

There was plenty of cotton to be got in the ordinary bales, but that would make a great difference in stowage, particularly in a small vessel like the *Rob Roy*.

Cotton bales compressed into such a small and compact body as we had had on the last two trips were unusual and not always to be had. These bales, though containing over five hundred pounds of cotton, were little more than half the size of ordinary bales, and so heavy that they would scarcely float in water.

There was only one cotton press at Houston which had the power to press bales into such a small compass, and this had been got up expressly to suit the stowage of the small blockade-running schooners; and as it often got out of order, and the arrival of so many steamers had created such a demand upon it that, if we waited our turn, it would be uncertain when we would get loaded.

In the meantime I must get the damage to the vessel repaired, get a new main-boom, and a new topmast if possible.

Notwithstanding the verbal order of Commodore Smith, I knew there would likely be the usual red-tape shuffling when I went to apply for the spar, but I would just have to persist.

Just then another steamer got in from Havana, and upon her, in the capacity of first mate, was my friend Flagg. He had not taken the command of the schooner after all, but had got tired of their humbugging, as he called it, and shipped as mate on a steamer.

Bill was still the same devil-me-care sort of a fellow. He was now in his element; he knew every one about Galveston in office or out of office, and made himself on easy terms with them all; he would have his joke, and cared little who might be the victim of it. Learning that the *Rob Roy* had got in, it was not long till he came on board. On seeing the main-boom broken, he asked how it happened. I told him how it happened and what Commodore Smith had said, but I said I had forgot the name of the captain in the Transport service that I was to apply to.

"Oh," said he, "it is old Bricktop who has charge of the spars. You go to him. If Commodore Smith has ordered you to get a spar, he will not refuse it."

Sometime afterwards I went to see about getting the spar. I passed near to where Bill's vessel lay, and saw Bill in company with some friends on the wharf. I thought him a little jolly, and quite ready for a lark of some kind.

"Have you got your spar?" he said.

"I have not," said I, "but I am going to see about it now. What do you say is that captain's name that I am to apply to?"

"Bricktop," said he. "Just go up to the Transport office and inquire for Captain Bricktop."

I went up to the office, and saw two clerks writing, and a man with very red hair sitting at the table at the far end of the room.

"I wish to see Captain Bricktop," said I.

The clerks looked at me with astonishment, and, as I thought, suppressed merriment, but said nothing.

"Who the devil are you?" cried out the red-haired man in a fierce tone.

I was rather astonished at his manner, but, being well used to the arrogance of men in office, I stood up boldly, told him who I was, and said that Commodore Smith had ordered me to come to him to get a spar to replace my main-boom, which had been broken by the clumsy management of one of his transport steamers.

"And did Commodore Smith order you to come here and insult me?"

"He did not; and I have not done so."

"You have, sir; and I order you to leave this office and come back when you have learned to address me properly."

"What tremendous high rank do you hold," said I, turning round, looking at the clerks, and walking towards the door.

Just as I had got out to the top of the stair one of the clerks came out after me. I turned round and said to him—

"What high functionary is that of yours? What does he mean by saying that I insulted him?"

"So you did," said he.

"Why? How?"

"By calling him that name."

"What name? Captain Bricktop—is that not his name?"

"No," said he. "Who told you that was his name?"

"Bill Flagg," said I.

"Oh," said he, "just like Bill. He has been wanting to play a joke on you. That is a nickname on Captain B. on account of his red hair, and he hates it mightily."

"I will sort Bill for that," said I, starting off to look for Bill.

Bill had got on board of his vessel, and was surrounded by his friends, all convulsed with laughter. They all surrounded me, laughing and trying to appease me; but I was in a rage, and demanded an apology. I said to Bill that I thought he ought to have known me better than to try to make a butt of me. Bill came forward laughing, and said that he would make a hundred apologies, and he assured me that it was out of no disrespect to me, but really the chance that was offered to have a bit of fun with old Bricktop was so good that he could not lose the opportunity, even if it had been his own father that was in my place.

I said that was all very well so far as the joke was concerned, but he had done me an injury, because I would now have trouble in getting the spar which I was applying for.

"Oh, don't concern yourself about that," said Bill; "I will get the spar for you, and the best that is in the spar-shed."

I was not quite satisfied and had my doubts about it; but he said—

"You leave it to me. I will have the spar on board of your vessel to-morrow morning."

I wondered how he was going to manage it; but Bill was an offhand forward-going fellow: he had taken an active part in the capture of the *Harriet Lane*, was very popular, and was so well acquainted with everything about the marine department at Galveston that he seemed to have the whip hand of most of the officials.

Next morning sure enough Bill came down with a gang of negroes carrying a fine large spar. I feared he might have taken it without warrant, and there might be some trouble

about it; but the negroes assured me it was all right—that the big captain knew all about it.

"Now," said Bill, "you will want a carpenter. I will send over our 'chips,' he is doing nothing else, anyhow; but you want a top-mast, too."

I said I wanted a topmast, but I had no order to get that; I had lost that at sea, and must try and get one for myself.

"Oh," said he, "they owe you one for the trouble they have given you. There are plenty of studding-sail booms in the shed, one of them will make you a first-rate topmast. Come along," said he to the negroes, "and I will give you one to bring down."

"Stop, Bill," said I, "take care and not get us into any trouble. I had no authority to get a topmast."

"Confound the authority!" said he; "if you intend to abide by authority, and go all through their red-tape orders and formalities, you will never get anything. These spars would be in the shed till they rot, and no one would get them, unless one has the cheek just to go and take them. Mind you, what is everybody's property is nobody's property; and you have as good a right to the spars as anybody else; and I will take the responsibility," and off he went, and soon came down with a long studding-sail-boom. "That," said he, "will make you a famous topmast, and enough cut off to make you either a fore-gaff or a jib-boom. Now I will go and send over the carpenter," and off he went.

I was thus saved a great amount of trouble, for I had anticipated there would be some formalities to be got through; and I could not help thinking that there was some truth in his remarks about the folly of always abiding by red-tape formalities, although I was not in a position to act as he had done. However, for the favour he had done, I thought I could afford to forgive him for the joke he had played upon me.

In a few days I had the new main-boom rigged out, and a new topmast sent up, and all ready for sea again; but the chance of getting loaded was very remote. The cargo had all been disposed of, but of course not for specie, such a thing was out of the question, most of it had been sold to the Government for cotton warrants. For the seed potatoes there had

been quite a rush, a few barrels had been sold for specie, but the greater part was sold, one barrel for a bale of cotton; and there were warrants to obtain cotton sufficient to load the ship twice over, but, unfortunately, it was all in ordinary bales, and the great difficulty was to get it compressed.

I went up to the press at Houston to see what chances there might be, and how long it would be before I could get a cargo compressed; but I could get no promise, several steamers were before me, and they would be obliged to take uncompressed cotton for their deck-loads, but they must have compressed cotton to stow under decks. The press was in very bad order, and constantly breaking down, and they could not get it repaired, through want of proper men and material.

While at the cotton-press I learned that Messrs. R. and D. G. M. had been making some inquiries about the *Rob Roy*, and when she would be likely to get her cargo.

This might be natural enough, but somehow it aroused my suspicion, and I wondered whether they might be concocting some plan to get the vessel detained on some pretence, in order to get me to come to their terms in regard to last trip.

Seeing this state of matters I began to consider what was best to be done. To load with uncompressed cotton we could not stow in the vessel more than two-thirds of what she took out last trip, and not more than one-third of the cotton which had been got for the inward cargo, and all that was left behind would be dead loss, as nothing could be got for it but Confederate scrip, or cotton bonds, which was now valueless outside of the Confederacy; therefore, to go out short-loaded when the whole question of profits depended upon the amount of cotton carried out would certainly be bad policy.

On the other hand, if we lay here for two months or more, waiting for compressed cotton, there was no saying what might happen. We would be subject at any time to be pressed into the service of the Government. There was also constant expectation of an attack being made on the place by the Federal forces, in which case every vessel in the port would be seized or destroyed, to prevent her falling into the hands of the enemy. There would also be the expense in wages and provisions, which could not be replaced, as well as damage to the vessel

by her bottom fouling. I therefore thought the latter policy as bad as the first, and determined to load with uncompressed cotton.

I stated my intentions to Mr. C., who merely said, "Very well, I think it is the best thing you can do; but what," said he, "shall I do with the balance of the proceeds of the inward cargo?"

I did not know what was best; but it was arranged that he should get me a cargo, as much as I could take, of good cotton, in the best packed and pressed bales that was to be had, and the balance in cotton bonds, which he would forward with the account sales of the inward cargo to Mr. R. M. in Havana.

I requested that he would get me my cargo immediately, as I wished to get off while the days were short and the winds were good, and I should like to be ready to sail before the change of the moon.

He showed me twenty-four bales which he had got for twenty-four barrels of seed potatoes, which were all good and well packed and pressed, and he would get me about one hundred more in a day or two.

In a very short time we had the vessel loaded, but she only took about one hundred and forty-five bales and some half bales, one of which was crammed into the dingey.

I then got a clearance from the custom house, and a permission to pass the Forts. This latter I got very easily this time, through the instrumentality of my friend Bill Flagg. As to the breach of regulations last trip, in going out without a permission to pass the Forts, I knew that would never be brought up, if remembered at all, as it was a mere military formality of the moment.

Having now got all ready, we stood away to the east side of the bay, to take observations of the position of the blockading fleet, and be ready to run out on the first favourable night.

I may here say that Mr. C., the consignee, had told me that he had received a letter from Mr. R. M. in Havana, complaining in bitter terms of the very high charges which had been laid upon his cotton by the consignees in Tampico, and the great delay and high freight and heavy premium of insurance in shipping from that port to Liverpool; and requesting him, Mr. C., to ask me to try and make Vera Cruz if possible.

I therefore cleared for the latter port, leaving it open to go into Tampico if necessity compelled me, but having letters of introduction from Mr. C., to a firm in Vera Cruz if I made that port; the vessel and cargo as usual being consigned to master.

CHAPTER XX.

Outward trip—Waiting for a favourable night to run out—Take the first that offers—Not very favourable—Observed by the blockading fleet, and brought to—The enemy's boat comes alongside—Singular accident—Perilous position of the enemy's boat and crew—A scene of confusion—We escape in the flurry—A cruiser in the distance at daylight—Southerly winds—A norther—A false alarm—Arrival at Vera Cruz—Landing and disposal of the cargo—Departure from Vera Cruz—Arrival at Havana.

WE lay for several days waiting for a good breeze and a dark night to run out, but the wind continued light and southerly. We expected we should have had a norther about the change of the moon, but the new moon came in without bringing any change in the weather.

As the nights would now be getting light, it was evident that if we did not get out soon we would have to lay over till the dark nights came again in the last quarter of the moon. This was what I by no means wished to do.

The blockading fleet lay in about the same position, but there were more vessels, and the one stationed near the mouth of the Swash Channel seemed to be even closer in than when we went out last trip.

A few days after the new moon it blew one day a strong gale from the south, and the weather was thick and rainy. Towards evening the wind changed to about E.S.E., but still blew hard, and the night was dark and cloudy, and I resolved to venture. Having put reefs in the main and foresails, we raised anchor about 7 p.m., and stood down the bay, keeping well on the eastward side of the main inlet, to enable us to reach the entrance to the west or Swash Channel. After carefully feeling our way by soundings, we found the entrance, and stood down the channel.

The tide was rising. The vessel was drawing just a little over four feet of water, and as there was about eight feet in the channel, we gave her a little of the centre-board. She was in good sailing trim, but taking a little weather helm.

The wind having been upon the land for some time there was a heavy sea outside, and—although in the channel, between the reef and the beach, it was smooth—the breakers were heavy on the beach beyond the reef, at the outer end of the channel.

It being flood-tide a strong current was coming from seaward over the reef, so that we kept well up to the windward and seaward side of the channel. Owing to the noise of the breakers we were in no danger from being heard this time; but, unfortunately, just as we were approaching the outer end of the channel some black clouds in the west suddenly lifted, and the moon shone out clear, showing us plain to the gunboat, which was close by on the port bow.

"The devil's in the moon for mischief," said Byron. Whether his words have, or have not, been generally approved of, I do not know, but I am certain that at this time I made use of a similar expression.

We were within fifty yards of the mouth of the channel, when there was a flash and a report, and a ball whizzed across our bows, which was immediately followed by a second.

Whether our steersman, when the shots were fired, had by some nervous movement relaxed his hold and allowed the vessel to come up, or not, I do not know, but just as the second shot was fired the schooner took the ground on the outer and windward side of the channel, and stuck fast. The jib was hauled to windward. This suited a double purpose—a response to the summons from the gunboat for us to heave to, and also to bring the vessel off the bank. This last would only have been a matter of a few minutes, as the tide was rising, and a strong wind and current both tending to bring her off. But what did it matter now we were captured? No getting out of it this time.

We looked at each other, the expression was general—Captured at last, we must just submit to it.

The gunboat, seeing us brought to, stopped firing, and we

saw a boat approaching. It was a very large boat, and must have contained at least twelve men. When they got near to the mouth of the channel they hailed us:

"Schooner, ahoy! is your jib to windard?"

"Yes."

"Then come on ahead a little."

"We can't," I answered; "we are hard and fast aground."

They then pulled towards us, keeping to windward, as if they would come along upon our windward side.

Knowing that we were prisoners, I thought that civility was a cheap article, and as they approached I cried out: "I think you had better come on the lee side. You will scarcely have water on our windward side."

They seemed to hesitate. The breakers were sounding alarmingly close under our lee.

"How much water do you draw?" they cried.

"Four feet," I answered; "and we are aground on the windward side of the channel."

They, however, did not seem assured, but still continued to pull towards our weather side, a man in the bow of their boat trying the depth of the water with a boat-hook. When they got up near to the schooner the water suddenly shoaled, and they made for the lee side. In doing this they passed close under our bows; the wind and tide carrying the boat along, the men unshipped their oars, and the man in the bow of the boat with his boat-hook caught hold of the leech of our jib, to check her headway and bring her in on our lee side.

The schooner, which had been but lightly aground, was, with the rising tide, working gradually off the bank, under the pressure of the jib, to windward, and when the weight of the boat came upon her lee bow it pulled her afloat, and she came round quickly upon the boat, striking her about midship, nearly tilting her over, and partly filling her with water; and now followed a scene of confusion which I can scarcely describe. It was blowing hard, the fore and main-sheets being eased off, and the jib hauled to windward, the schooner payed off rapidly, heading towards the breakers, pushing the water-logged boat before her. For a moment I thought the boat would have been crushed under the schooner, and every man

in her drowned, as we could not have helped them. And now there was not a moment to lose, as two minutes more and we would all have been in the breakers.

"Draw jib, haul in sheets, and luff up quick," I cried; and this was quickly done, and not a moment too soon.

As soon as the jib was drawn, the helm put hard down, and sheets aboard, the schooner shot ahead on her former course, still pushing the boat before her. There had been a flagstaff in the stern of the boat, and that had got caught in the head-gear of the schooner, and the boat was pushed forward, stern foremost, at an angle, across the bows of the schooner.

The sudden jerk of the jib when cast off caused the man with the boat-hook to lose his hold, but he, in desperation, made a sudden grab, and got a fresh hold, and held on with great determination.

Meanwhile, the confused orders and shouts on board of the boat were loud and furious, some crying to shove off, others to hold on, and the confusion was fearful. I think the officer in command of the boat had been knocked down by the head-gear of the schooner, when she slipped off the bank and came down upon them, for it was some time before I heard him take up the command.

"On board the schooner there!" he cried. "Drop your anchor."

"We can't," I cried. "Anchor is not clear, and there is no room to anchor here, we would all go in the breakers; but, cast off your boat-hook, and I will round to as soon as I get out of this narrow channel."

He did not, however, seem inclined to lose hold of the schooner, but made an effort to get the flagstaff clear of the schooner's head-gear. This they effected after some difficulty, and the stern of the boat swung out; but they still hung on with their boat-hook to our jib sheet.

"Jump on board of her, some of you," cried the officer; but this was easier said than done. The deck-load of cotton bales, standing on their ends, formed a compact wall high above the bulwarks of the schooner, and by this time we had got past the end of the reef, and out of the channel into the open sea, and there was a very heavy swell, and the schooner began to plunge

violently, and the boat under her bow, being already half full of water, was in great danger; while we could not shorten sail or slack anything, or we should all have been in the breakers, when not one—at least of those in the boat—would have lived to tell the tale.

It was blowing a stiff gale of wind, and the schooner went ahead with considerable force, but with the weight of the boat hanging on to her lee bow, it took all the lee helm, with centre-board down, to keep her clear of the breakers, while the heavy seas caused her to plunge so violently that the boat could not come close enough to allow any one to jump on board. While she was taking more water in at every plunge of the schooner, I thought every moment she would be stove, and the men were certainly in great danger.

"For God's sake," I cried, "cast off your boat, and I will round to. If you don't we will be all in the breakers."

They paid no heed to this, but cried to us to luff up, when a large sea nearly swamped them.

"You at the wheel," cried the officer, "are you trying to drown us? Luff! d——n you! luff!"

"Luff hell!" cried Hagan, for it was he that was at the wheel. "She won't luff; the helm is hard down. But how can she luff with you hanging to her lee bow."

Nothing could be plainer than that.

"Cast off your boathook," I cried, "and I will give you a line from the quarter."

"Give us your line first," was the reply, "and be quick about it."

This was said in a somewhat imperious tone; rather too much so, I thought, for men in their predicament. They had sworn at our steersman, who was holding the vessel up with all his might, and had he slacked his hand for one moment, the schooner would have crushed the boat under, and every man of them would have perished. Up till the present I had thought of nothing but the saving of their lives, and now for the first time did the thought of escape cross my mind.

We were now past the gunboat and getting further away from her, but I saw another boat coming towards us. The clouds had again obscured the moon and the gunboat was

becoming dimmer in the distance. I knew she would not fire on account of her own men, and the second boat could not come up to us unless we rounded to.

I got a rope, which I coiled up slowly; while unseen in the darkness I took the cook's hatchet from the galley door. I then cried to them to look out, and I stood near the man at the helm and threw the line to them. The main-boom, however, was in the way, and the rope fell short. This, I may say, was intended by me, as I wished to gain time and get farther away from the gunboat. An imprecation came from those in the boat as the rope fell short.

"Just have patience," said I, "the main-boom was in the way. Let me get forward of that, and I will bring you alongside in a minute."

I passed forward of the main-boom, and threw the line again, which they caught.

"Let me make this end fast," I said, belaying the end to a belaying-pin under the quarter rail.

The officer then said—

"Pass this line forward, and let the boat drop astern, and be ready to hold on."

Now was the time for the game I meant to play, but I nearly spoi't it by being too precipitate.

The boathook was cast off to let the boat drop astern, and the men began to haul in on the rope. Just then I seized the hatchet and severed the rope.

A volley of oaths came from those in the boat, but I had been rather too quick in cutting the rope; for before the boat fell astern, the man with the boathook made a sudden grab, and caught hold of our quarter rail, but with a heavy blow of the hatchet I knocked away the boathook, and the boat dropped astern, and at the same moment there was a shot from a revolver, and a ball whizzed past my head.

I threw myself quickly down, and crawled aft to where the man at the wheel stood protected by the dingey, which was crammed full of cotton.

They fired several more shots, but it was impossible for them to hit any of us.

The schooner, being freed from the weight of the boat, went

off with a bound, and in a minute or two the boat was left out of sight in the darkness astern. The second boat would have to go to the assistance of the first, as she was nearly full of water and close to the breakers.

Shortly afterwards several shots were fired from the gunboat in our direction, but we cared little for that, as we knew that firing to leeward at night was very blind random, as the smoke of the first shot darkens the air in the direction of the object fired at, and we were rapidly increasing our distance from them.

How all this happened we could scarcely tell. The whole thing was so sudden and unexpected that we could scarcely realize that we were off free again. There was, however, still danger to be apprehended. They would certainly make an effort to capture us yet, and woe betide us if they did—at least, so thought the crew.

I did not see, however, that they could blame us in the least. It was through no fault of ours that their boat got into such a dangerous position. The whole thing happened by their bringing the weight of their boat heavily upon the stranded schooner, and pulling her afloat and down upon their own boat. This was an accident, of course, and certainly no fault of ours. It was in an extremely dangerous place near the mouth of a narrow channel, with the breakers under the lee. A false move on our part, whether accidental or intentional—and it would never be known which—would have been fatal to them all, and we did the best we could to save their lives. As to my last action in cutting clear of them and getting away, when this was done they were out of danger, and another boat was near to assist them, and they could not blame me for trying to avoid being captured.

What was best to be done was now considered. There was no doubt but the patrol cruisers, which cruised outside with steam up, would have heard the firing and would be on the look-out to cut us off, and others would be sent in pursuit of us.

We therefore stood along the shore to the westward, keeping just clear of the breakers for about twelve miles. We then hauled up on the wind, shook reefs out of main- and fore-sails,

becoming dimmer in the distance. I knew she would not fire on account of her own men, and the second boat could not come up to us unless we rounded to.

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We therefore stood along the shore to the westward, keeping just clear of the breakers for about twelve miles. We then hauled up on the wind, shook reefs out of main- and fore-sails,

I had never been to Vera Cruz, but the mate and several of the men had been there. They said that Vera Cruz, like Tampico, was a dangerous place in a norther for large vessels lying in the open roads, but small vessels like ours could get in behind the castle of San Juan, and anchor quite snug.

There was now not much danger of being overhauled by a cruiser, as during a norther the air is generally dark and thick, and a vessel cannot be seen at any great distance.

We stood on under easy sail, the gale not being very severe, and in about three days it died away, and the weather cleared up, and the wind came out from about S.S.E., and we saw the snow-capped peak of Orisaba bearing about west by south.

There was now some danger from cruisers, as they often hovered off the Mexican ports, with the view of picking up a cotton-loaded prize, and in this they were sometimes successful.

I found by observation that we were about twenty miles from Vera Cruz, and we had set all sail to reach that port as soon as possible, when the man at the mast-head reported a large steamer to the eastward.

I went to the mast-head with the glass and examined her. She bore about east by south, and was steering towards us, but was still a long distance off.

The object was now to reach Vera Cruz before she could overhaul us. The wind was blowing a good steady breeze, and if it continued we thought we could manage it.

We trimmed everything to the best advantage, and kept the sails wet by throwing water upon them, and the vessel went along at a good speed, and soon afterwards we could make out the vessels at anchor off Vera Cruz.

We were now in a fair way of getting up near to the shipping before we could be overhauled. But the question was, how far did the jurisdiction of a neutral port extend? This, like many other questions which in times of peace are little thought of, was now of some importance, and was very undecided.

The Yankees had on several occasions followed vessels up, and captured them right off the entrance to a neutral port.

Mexico was a weak power; and there was no land-locked

harbour at Vera Cruz, and the ships had to lay in the open roads, except such small vessels as could get into the shallow water inside of the castle of San Juan.

We, of course, could get in there, but we would require a pilot to take us in; and they might bring us to with their guns and make a prize of us before we could get within the range of the guns of the castle of San Juan or get a pilot.

I therefore thought the best way would be to keep, if possible, in a straight line between the cruiser and the shipping, so that they could not fire upon us on account of the ships beyond us; and when we reached the shipping, if we did not get a pilot at once, to run the chance of going in without one. The mate, having been several times to Vera Cruz in small vessels, said he knew the passage to the back of the castle, and could take the vessel in.

I went to take a look astern to see how much our pursuer was gaining upon us. She was now a good deal closer, and was sending up a column of black smoke. This, some of the men remarked to me, was something unusual for a cruiser to do, as they generally burned hard anthracite coal, which sent out very little smoke.

After taking a steady look at her with the glass, I turned round relieved, and with a hearty laugh said—

"What had we been all frightened about? It was no cruiser at all, but the Spanish mail steamer *Barcelona*, from Havana to Vera Cruz."

This, however, instead of being a relief to the crew, was rather a disappointment. They were now so certain that we would get in before the steamer could overhaul us, that they would rather it had been a cruiser, so that they would have had another victory to talk about. I told them that they ought to be satisfied with the victory they had gained already on this trip, in nearly swamping the man-of-war's boat at Galveston, and getting away out of the hands of the Philistines, and that might serve them to blow about for a while.

It was, however, such incidents that gave life and excitement to blockade-running crews. They liked, after a trip, while spending their money, to have some adventure or escape

to talk about, and it was considered a dull trip which had not been attended with some exciting incident.

We got up to the outer anchorage, and a pilot came on board, who took us to an anchorage among the smaller vessels under the lee of the castle of San Juan de Ulloa.

The pilot spoke English well, and I asked him a few questions about the port, and he readily gave me the information I desired. He was, however, a little inclined to be amusing; for when I asked him where the office of the British Consul was, he directed to near the place, and said—

"When you get there any one will tell you."

"But," said I, "how can I inquire? I can't speak Spanish."

"Oh," said he, "you will find plenty who can speak English."

"But how am I to know them? I don't wish to stop people on the street and ask if they can speak English."

He gave rather a humorous smile, and said—

"Near to the place there are several grog-shops, and you may chance to see some tipsy men, and if you see a tipsy man you may be sure he speaks English."

"Well, that is certainly a compliment to the English language," said I, as the fellow, with a mischievous laugh, jumped into his boat.

The castle of San Juan de Ulloa is a fortress of considerable strength, of a rectangular shape, built upon a reef in front of the town of Vera Cruz, about half a mile off, and lying nearly parallel with the coast. The water inside, between it and the shore, is shallow, so that only small vessels can get there, and being partly open to the north and south, it affords but indifferent shelter. Seeing this, I determined to make our stay here as short as possible.

The crew agreed to take their bonuses here, and an advance on their wages, but continue on the vessel, and be paid off at Havana.

I called upon the firm, to whom I had letters from Mr. C., and they were appointed consignees; and the usual formalities of entry being gone through, the cargo of cotton was landed, weighed, and divided into two equal parts, as at Tampico on

the former trip, and Mr. R. M.'s half delivered to the consignees in terms of the letter of consignment.

There were two or three small schooners lying here which had run out from Texas with cargoes of cotton. These vessels, like most others of their class in the trade, were commanded by their owners. Men generally possessed of limited means, and who knew better how to handle their vessels at sea than transact business on shore. They were now trying to effect an arrangement with some mercantile firm to go shares with them in another trip, but as usual the terms offered were too one-sided for them to accept, and they did not wish to undergo the danger of the run up to Havana with their small vessels at that season of the year.

One of these masters, Captain E., had landed his cargo of cotton at Tampico, and was unable at that port to arrange for a return cargo, and he had come to Vera Cruz in ballast to see if he could arrange for a cargo there, but so far he had been unsuccessful.

He had been consigned to the same firm in Tampico to whom I had been consigned last trip, and with whom I had left my cotton to be shipped to Liverpool, and he gravely hinted to me that he feared that by the time my cotton was sold in Liverpool there would be but a small balance coming to me.

He seemed a little soured with the mercantile class in general, and I made a little allowance for that; but taking this with what Mr. R. M. in Havana had wrote to Mr. C. in Galveston, I feared there might be some reason for what he said, but I was powerless in the matter so far as regarded that cargo.

From what I had learned, however, I was not inclined to leave our moiety of this cargo in the hands of a consignee at Vera Cruz, and thought of taking the whole of it, which was seventy-three bales, in the schooner to Havana, but the news had just arrived by the Spanish mail steamer that two blockade-running schooners, which had recently sailed from Vera Cruz for Havana with a part of their cargo of cotton on board, had both been captured on the neutral passage.

This caused me to hesitate. I had twice made the run

from Tampico to Havana and never saw a cruiser, but perhaps the attention of the cruisers had lately been called to this intermediate passage, and they did not now seem to respect the clearance from a neutral port if the vessel was known to be a blockade runner, and her cargo had been run through the blockade.

Meanwhile the consignees informed me that another mercantile firm was desirous of purchasing some cotton to complete the loading of a vessel which they were despatching for Liverpool. The price they offered was much below the market price at Havana, but when I considered the danger of capture on the passage, and the little better alternative of leaving it in the hands of consignees, to be swallowed up in charges at Vera Cruz and Liverpool, I was induced to accept the offer for a part at least. So that if I lost upon the sale I lessened the risk.

I must, however, retain some for ballast, as that was very difficult to get at Vera Cruz. I therefore agreed to sell forty-five bales, retaining and risking, as on the former trips, twenty-eight bales, which I reshipped on new bills of lading.

The crew being all on board, there was no detention in that respect. I got what additional stores were required, and sailed from Vera Cruz for Havana about the beginning of February.

The usual and shortest course from Vera Cruz to Havana was to cross the Bay of Campeachy, and stand up the coast of Yucatan. Keeping near to the coast to avoid as much as possible the adverse current of the Gulf Stream, but as it was upon this route that the recent captures had been made, I deemed it best to shape my course to the northward, and pass through the middle of the Gulf, standing as far north as latitude 25°; by this route we better evaded the cruisers, and were also well to windward if a norther should happen to blow.

There was nothing exciting or interesting on this run; we had favourable winds all the way, and reached Havana in eight days without seeing a cruiser.

Of course, I now regretted that I had not brought the whole of the cotton in the vessel, as I could have got a much higher

price for it in Havana than I sold it for in Vera Cruz, but such were the chances of the times.

Now came the most disagreeable part of the business, which was the business transactions on shore. Difficult and distasteful to me then to perform; disagreeable to me now to relate; and boring and tiresome they must be to my readers. I wish I could have left them altogether out of this narrative.

CHAPTER XXI.

Mr. R. M. brings up the question of the second voyage—We dissolve partnership—The schooner sold by auction—He buys her in—She sails on another voyage—Fate of the *Rob Roy*—Havana crowded with blockade-running steamers.

ADVICES of our arrival at Vera Cruz had been brought from that port to Havana by the Spanish mail steamer, and very soon after we anchored I received a note from Mr. R. M., requesting me to consign to a new firm recently started, and of which (as I afterwards learned)—though his name did not appear—he was chief partner.

His message, however, came too late. I had already reported the vessel to the boarding officers as consigned to Messrs. A. and Co., my former consignees, and I did not wish to change.

My partner's representative, Mr. P., whom I had not seen since I had been in Texas on the second voyage, now came on board.

Mr. P. took no active part in the business, either afloat or on shore, but he had extensive acquaintance in Texas, and among those engaged in blockade running, and knew most of what was going on. He advised me strongly not to consign to the new firm, and wished to put me on my guard, as he suspected that Mr. R. M. had been playing a double game, and was going to bring up the question of the second voyage.

He told me that I might expect a severe turn up with Mr.

R. M. He said the object of the latter in persuading me to make this last trip had been to get the vessel back into Texas, where Messrs. M., through their influence at the Provost Marshal's Department, would find some means of laying an embargo upon her, and have her, under some pretext, detained until I acceded to their terms, and when he had learned that I had loaded so hurriedly with uncompressed cotton, and sailed before they had time to carry out their designs, he was very much disappointed and irritated.

He also said that Mr. R. M. had had several vessels captured lately, and had lost heavily, and he was in very bad humour.

I could scarcely believe this story, but on going to my consignees and getting my letters, I found one from the consignees in Tampico, stating that Mr. R. M. had written to them disputing my right to the half of the cargo of cotton, and requesting them to hold it until further advice.

They had, however, replied that by the bills of lading, and by the letter of R. and D. G. M. themselves, there could not be the slightest doubt about my right to the half of the cargo, and, according to the manifesto, I might have retained possession of the whole of it without question had I so wished.

Other advices regarding the cotton were not satisfactory. These were to the effect that it had been sent off several times in lighters to the mail steamers, but owing to bad weather it could not be taken on board, and it had been brought back with the packages much damaged, entailing a large expense to have it repacked. On reading this latter part I was somewhat disheartened, as there seemed to have been some truth in what was stated to me by Captain E. at Vera Cruz. But on finding out how Mr. R. M. had been acting, I was much irritated, and spoke on the subject to my consignees, Messrs. A. and Co.

Messrs. A. and Co., whom I found to be upright and honourable men, spoke and wrote English perfectly; they knew the whole arrangement between myself and Mr. R. M., and had seen the memorandum of agreement.

They advised me to be calm, and not say much on the subject until I had seen Mr. R. M., as there might be some

misrepresentation. They could scarcely believe that he could act so on the face of the arrangement between him and me, although they said there were many such questionable actions done by men who had recently come to Havana to act as agents for blockade runners, the latter being generally thoughtless men who knew little about sharp practice in what was sometimes called business, and they were very helpless in such a place as Havana, where they neither knew the language nor the customs of the place, and to them public offices and authorities were quite inaccessible except through agents. They told me to see Mr. R. M. at once, and hear what he had to say, and then come and see them, and they would advise me what to do, and assist me so far as my deficiency in a knowledge of the language and customs of the port required.

When I called upon Mr. R. M., he received me in a somewhat reserved manner, but congratulated me on my successful accomplishment of the trip.

I laid before him a written statement of the events on the trip, with an extract from the log-book. I also handed him a receipt and acknowledgments from the consignees at Vera Cruz for seventy-three bales of cotton delivered to them, as per bills of lading.

The first document he scarcely looked at, and turning over the second, he said—"So you have come out with half a cargo."

"No," said I; "I came out with a full cargo."

"Then where is it?" said he.

"One half of it belonged to you, and these papers will testify that I delivered it according to instructions, and in terms of the bills of lading."

"Was seventy-three bales the half of the cargo?"

"The whole cargo amounted to 146 bales, which was all the vessel could stow of uncompressed bales."

"That is fifty-two bales less than last trip," said he.

"Yes; but last trip the bales were compressed, and the vessel could take that much more, but compressed bales were not to be had this trip."

"The *Dahlia* and the *Catherine* got compressed bales, and why could not you?"

"The *Dahlia* and the *Catherine* were both loaded before the steamers got in, and before the cotton press broke down. By the by," I added, "where are those vessels now?"

This seemed to irritate him; he scowled, and pretended to read closely the paper before him, and then gruffly replied, without looking up—

"Well, they were captured, that is all; and I suppose you know that: but that is not the question. I think you ought to have waited and got compressed bales, and come out with a full cargo."

"I might have had to wait a little longer than I wanted," said I, "and I think I am better where I am, even with a smaller cargo, than lying under arrest in Galveston, or gone like the *Dahlia* and the *Catherine*. And if you please, we will now settle up accounts," and I laid before him the account for disbursements.

I saw he was getting nervous, but slow to come to the point. He examined carefully the account, and then said—

"I see you have not credited the vessel with the freight of your cotton from Tampico on last trip, and from Vera Cruz on this trip."

"I am quite ready to do so," said I, "but I should have to put against that the cost of ballasting the vessel on both trips, and if we take that into account, and the delay which would have been incurred, I expect the balance would be in my favour."

"But you endangered the vessel by having the cotton on board, because if you had been overhauled by a cruiser you would have been more apt to be seized having cotton on board."

"The vessel," said I, "is on the Yankee list as a habit and repute blockade runner, and they will seize her whenever they catch her, with or without cotton; but the cotton was a legitimate cargo, regularly cleared out of a neutral port, and not subject to seizure, and I endangered it by taking it on the vessel, which I would not have done if I could have got ballast cheap and handy; nevertheless, the whole thing is a small matter, and I will settle the other way if you wish."

He made no reply, but taking up some papers after a somewhat nervous effort, said—

"So the inward cargo last trip was not sufficient to purchase a cargo of cotton after all."

"You well know," said I, "that that is a thing which I have nothing to do with; according to your agreement with me it was your business to furnish a cargo sufficient for that, and you also know that such a statement is absurd, and that I laid that trumped-up story before you at the end of last voyage, and refused to have any further transactions with the house in Texas, and wished to dissolve the partnership, when you said that you adhered to your agreement, and that I should pay no heed to any statement made by the house in Texas."

"What do you mean by a trumped-up story?" said he, in a tone of anger and feigned astonishment. "Do you mean to insinuate that the house of R. and D. G. M. would trump up a statement that was not correct?"

He said this with an air of great importance, as if he wished to impress me with the awful consequence of daring to hint at such a thing.

I was a little amused at his trying to overawe me, and I replied that I did not insinuate at all, but said so straightforward.

This declaration quite disconcerted him.

"So you say," said he, "that the house of R. and D. G. M. are swindlers."

"I have no faith in their honour," said I, "and there's no use for any further altercation; all transactions between us must now cease. I hold your agreement with me in writing, and you can send me in writing any proposals you wish to make in regard to buying up the schooner or selling out of her."

"Written agreement with you?" said he. "What agreement was there? I have no copy of any agreement."

"You forget," said I; "here it is," and I produced it, and said—"Do you acknowledge that as your handwriting?"

He seemed astonished and taken aback, and said he would give me a premium of fifty dollars to say what I would give or take for half of the schooner.

I said I would give him double that amount to say the same,

but it was no use quibbling in that way; the vessel must be brought to public sale, and I took my leave.

I may here say that the way by which Messrs. M. in Texas arrived at the so-called balance against the vessel, as stated in their letter to me of August, 1864, was a very fair sample of what was often attempted to be practised at that time on strangers in dealings within the Confederate States, which was to avail themselves of the relative value of Confederate paper-money, as compared with coin and the treason of daring to under-rate or depreciate the value of the former.

Confederate paper money was the legal tender, and no one dare refuse it in payment, or attempt to depreciate its value, but 20 dollars of it could at that time be easily obtained privately for one dollar in coin. Business books and accounts were kept in Confederate money, and all commodities were high in proportion. Cotton, for example, was quoted at 6 cents per lb. in specie or cotton warrants, but in Confederate money the price was about 75 cents per lb.

Messrs. M. therefore took the inward cargo at its specie value, as per invoice, and credited the vessel for that amount in their books in Confederate money. They then summed up the cargo of cotton at its price in Confederate money, and debited the vessel with that amount, and then declared the balance in specie.

Mr. R. M. made no further attempt to justify the action of the house of R. and D. G. M., and the vessel was advertised for sale.

When the day of the sale came, I bid as high as 3,500 dollars for the vessel, and she was knocked down to an unknown bidder for 3,600 dollars. The purchaser was a mere lad, a clerk in an office, but a British subject, and of course he was only a godfather; and when the money came to be paid, I found that Mr. R. M. was the real purchaser. There was no hitch, however; the money was paid, and I made a final settlement with Mr. R. M., and the *Rob Roy* was transferred to new owners, retaining the British flag by means of a godfather.

As I must now bid adieu to the *Rob Roy*, I may here finish up with her career, which was but short under her new ownership.

Mr. R. M. had lately been rather unfortunate in his adventures to Galveston; several of his vessels had been captured, and others ran ashore, and he had resolved to try a venture in another place, which was supposed to be not generally known, and not very closely blockaded. This was the Suwanee river on the coast of Florida, where there was said to be abundance of cotton; and for a run to that place the *Rob Roy* was admirably adapted.

A new captain was appointed to her, and a pilot who was supposed to know the coast and the entrance to the river perfectly. Only one of the old crew shipped upon her, which was one of the men I had shipped at Tampico on the recommendation of Captain Currie on our first entrance to that port, and whom we called George No. 2, owing to a similarity he had to our old friend of that name; for, though a much younger man, and exceedingly sober and faithful, and an excellent seaman, he was, like his namesake, full of old sea proverbs, and believed in many of them. This man reshipped on the *Rob Roy* out of a veneration he had for the vessel, regarding her as a lucky vessel; and when some two months afterwards he related to me the story of her end, he seemed to be very much grieved.

She sailed from Havana about ten days after she was sold with a cargo for Suwanee River, in Florida. She made the Florida coast in three days, but when they got there they could not discover the river they wished to enter; and while sailing along the coast in search of an entrance, the United States gunboat *Fox* bore down upon them, and they ran the vessel on the beach and set fire to her, the crew taking to the boat. They landed safely on the beach, when George stood in sorrow and saw his good old craft, as he called her, burned to the water edge.

About this time blockade running had completely run riot at Havana.

The harbour was crowded with steamers which had been bought on account of their speed, or had been specially built for this traffic. Many of these, however, owing to some business dispute or other unexplained cause, lay at their anchors pending some business arrangements. Many more were expected,

and the hotels and cafés were thronged with captains and officers (old hands) who had been specially engaged, and were waiting to take the command of some crack new steamer which was on the way out to Havana to engage in blockade running, and which was to outdo everything which had yet appeared on the scene, and the merits and performances of the various vessels was the general topic on blockade-running "'Change."

Some good fast boats were making successful trips, among which were the *Lark*, the *Owl*, the *Lizzie*, and several others. What the original names of these vessels may have been I do not know, but most of them had changed their names, and some of them were under the Confederate States flag.

These were, however, soon to be put in the shade by another class of steamers, which now began to arrive. These were a larger class of steamers, with three funnels of great power, and expected to be of great speed.

I never learnt much of the performances of those steamers, as the sudden collapse of the Confederacy put an end to blockade-running before many of them had been tried, but the general opinion of them was that, although they might attain a high rate of speed, they were not suitable in other respects. They were all machinery together, and had very little carrying space. They would consume a large amount of fuel; and when they took in a sufficient quantity of coal at Havana to take them to Galveston and back, they would be loaded down so deep that their speed would be much impeded, and they would have very little carrying capacity left for cargo. They would send up immense clouds of smoke, and be observed at a long distance off. They would also be conspicuous when going through the blockading fleet during night, and their working expenses would be very high.

I may safely say that one of the most successful, and certainly one of the most profitable, steamers that sailed out of Havana to the Confederate States was a somewhat old, and by no means a fast, steamer, named the *Denbigh*. This vessel ran for a considerable time between Havana and Mobile; but when the latter port was captured by the Federals she ran to Galveston, to and from which port she made such regular

trips that she was called the packet. She was small in size, and not high above water, and painted in such a way as not to be readily seen at a distance. She was light on coal, made but little smoke, and depended more upon strategy than speed. She carried large cargoes of cotton, and it was generally allowed that the little *Denbigh* was a more profitable boat than any of the larger and swifter cracks.

CHAPTER XXII.

Out of employment—Engaged as sailing-master and pilot—The steamer *Phœnix*—Steamer life new to me—Steamer and crew new to blockade running—Smoke a matter of importance in this traffic—A cruiser in the distance—A chase cut short by night setting in—Arrival in Galveston.

IT was not without some feelings of regret that I removed my effects from the old schooner, and handed her over to the new captain. The vessel had been my domicile and source of business for nearly two years, and considering her size for the extent of seas she had travelled over, and the dangerous nature of the work she had been engaged in, she had, when she got fair play, done her part very well, and I was somewhat attached to her.

I now felt myself without position or occupation, and no longer in the circle which was causing such a stir in Havana, and as living at an hotel was irksome and expensive, I was wishful of settling up with my partner, and getting into some active occupation.

The difficulty in the way of settling up was the cotton, which was left at Tampico, and the accounts we had from the agents there were anything but satisfactory.

Mr. P. had got a considerable amount of money advanced out of the proceeds of the trips on account of his share in the schooner, and as he attached a very high value to the cotton which was at Tampico, I proposed to him that we should both go to Tampico on the Spanish mail steamer, and ascertain the

state of matters in regard to the cotton, and try and get it shipped, or otherwise disposed of, and have all accounts settled up.

Mr. P., who was not very fond of salt water, or of much exertion of any kind, seemed to find himself very comfortable in his hotel at Havana, thought there was no necessity of incurring the expense of us both going to Tampico, and suggested that I should go alone and arrange matters as I thought best.

This I did not approve of, and insisted on him accompanying me, as I feared he was spending a little more money than his principal might approve of. However, as he had got full powers from his principal, that was no business of mine, but I wished the business wound up.

When the Spanish mail steamer arrived I had a letter from Messrs. G. and Co., stating that, after many unsuccessful attempts to ship the cotton on the mail steamer, each time incurring very heavy expense, they had decided to ship the cotton on a brig, of which they were themselves owners and agents, which had just arrived, and was going to load for Liverpool. I thought this rather strange, as I was aware that both the British and Spanish mail steamers had taken on board cotton at Tampico on their two last trips.

Mr. P., who, though a somewhat indolent and pleasure-seeking man, could see into a bit of sharp practice much faster than me, at once remarked that the expected arrival of Messrs. G. and Co.'s own vessel might have something to do with the difficulty of getting the cotton shipped on the mail steamer. I did not quite agree with him in that, as I thought that Messrs. G and Co., which was a German house of good standing, would do the best in their power for our interests, as they had promised. Still, the advice was not satisfactory. They did not say if the cotton was already shipped, when it would be shipped, or what would be the rate of freight, and they seemed to be preparing me to expect a very high account for charges.

There was now little use of going to Tampico. However, as I was not quite satisfied with the advice, and I could not brook hanging about idle, I resolved to go.

I had all arranged to sail upon the following evening, when,

just as I was going to bed that night, some gentlemen came to the hotel inquiring for me, and were shown up to my room.

They proceeded at once to state their business. They were the owner and agents of a steamer which was then laying in the harbour. She was all ready and loaded to sail. They wished her to run the blockade into Galveston; but there was some little difficulty about the management of her in the way of commanding. She had recently come out from London with the object of running from Havana into Galveston. The captain who had brought her out had fulfilled his part by bringing her to Havana, and he would not engage to run the blockade. The owner or acting owner, having learned something of the powers that captains and consignees had over owners in the Confederacy, and wishing to have more control over the vessel, wished to be on the articles himself as captain. He had commanded steamers on inland water, but had not much experience at sea, and knew nothing of navigation. He had a first and second mate who were thorough seamen, but neither was proficient in navigation, and they had never sailed in the Gulf, and knew nothing of the coast of Texas; and as correct navigation was everything in blockade running, they wanted a man to act as sailing master who was a good navigator, and knew something of the coasts and the entrance into Galveston.

They had been told that I was the very person to suit them, but had learned that I was about to leave for Tampico on the following day, and therefore they apologized for calling upon me at that unseasonable hour; but if I would accept the position, and undertake to navigate the vessel into Galveston —dangers of the seas and enemies, of course, excepted—they would pay me a bonus in advance of 500 dollars, and at the rate of 150 dollars per month from the beginning to the end of the trip, and another bonus of 500 dollars when the trip was successfully terminated. I would not require to take any watch, or any part of the ship's duty, except as regarded the navigation.

I said I would give them no answer that night, but would think over the matter, and I would come on board in the morning, and have a look at the vessel.

I somehow felt no great inclination to ship on a steamer on these terms. It seemed a sort of subordinate position; but when I reflected upon the time it would be before we could get advices of the proceeds of our cotton and get matters settled up, I could not brook the idea of hanging about idle till then, and I must find some active employment in the meantime.

In the morning I went to see the steamer. She lay near the head of the bay. Her name was the *Phœnix*. She was not a paddle steamer, but a double propeller, somewhat larger, and had a little better carrying capacity than most of the blockade-running steamers. She was of a flat, shallow build, with considerable breadth of beam, and when loaded would draw a little over seven feet of water. This was just deep enough to enter Galveston by the Swash Channel, which was the deepest channel that I was acquainted with; but as she would be lightened up by her consumption of coal before reaching that port, I thought I could take her through. She was schooner-rigged, and would have at a distance the appearance of a United States gunboat. I thought there might be some advantage in this if we were not called upon to signal.

After a little talk over the matter I agreed to join the vessel, with the special understanding that the entire conduct of the navigation, look-out, and strategical movements should be left to me.

I then went to the Consulate, and signed the articles as sailing master.

The steamer was tolerably well found, and had a good chronometer, which was at the optician's; but I took my own sextant and charts, the charts on the vessel being of an old date and not very correct, whereas I had marked on my own several errors, and anything I had found worthy of note on the Texas coast, and the entrance to Galveston.

I thought of taking my own chronometer, which I could better depend upon, but as I knew that I would lose it if captured, and the ship's chronometer seemed a good one, I decided not to risk my own. I took only a very small kit, merely what clothing I might require for the trip as I knew

that, if captured or destroyed, I would lose everything except what I stood in.

We sailed out of Havana just before sunset about the 1st of March, standing along the coast to the westward until it was quite dark, and then shaping the course direct for Galveston.

I found things very different on this vessel from what I had been used to on the *Rob Roy*. On that vessel there was but few of us, old hands well known to each other, and united together, as it were, by our little adventures and escapes. All had a kind of veneration for the vessel, and seemed to take as much interest in everything about her as I did myself; all seemed to agree and were happy, and took great delight at spare times in talking over little incidents where we had eluded the vigilance of the Yankees.

On board this vessel it was quite a different state of things. There was, besides myself, the captain, first and second mates, two quartermasters, two seamen and a lamp boy, first, second, and third engineers, four firemen and two trimmers, cook and steward—some twenty in all. Some of them had come on the vessel from London; others had joined at Havana, but only two amongst them had ever run the blockade.

There was on this first night out a sort of reserve and estrangement over the whole crew. They seemed to be impressed with an idea that they were going upon some desperate undertaking, and some appeared to be awe-stricken, others seemed sullen and discontented. The firemen had been drinking and quarrelling, and some of them had begun to find fault with their food and to rebel against their treatment in general, and wanted to be put ashore. This, of course, was a very usual thing with them after they had got their advance. Upon the whole, I thought things rather unpleasant and cheerless, and very different from what it was with us on the *Rob Roy*.

As it was getting dark, the boy was placing the lights. I remarked to the captain that as soon as we shaped our course for Galveston they must take in these things.

"What!" said the captain; "do you intend to sail without lights? We can't do that; it would be against all regulations."

"When you enter this business," said I, "you must adopt a new code of regulations; and you know that I am to direct these things."

"Oh, certainly," said he; "what you say shall be done. But do you think there will be no danger of collision?"

"Not much without lights," said I, "as there are but few vessels on these seas; but with lights there would be danger of collision with a ball, which might be sent across our bows. Our policy is to see, and not to be seen, to keep a good look-out from the forecastle-head at night, and from the mast-head by day."

He quite understood me, but did not seem at all easy in his mind about running without lights.

This was my first trip in a steamer, but I had been often on board of blockade-running steamers, and had conversations with captains and engineers, and knew well their policy and system of working. I therefore requested to see the chief engineer, in order to have an understanding with him.

The chief engineer was a tall man of a military appearance, and sported a military moustache, and wore a foraging-cap. I asked him at what hours he generally cleaned his fires. He said that he cleaned only one fire at a time, so that the speed of the vessel was never much affected. I said that on blockade-running steamers it was necessary to have everything cleaned on the morning watch, so as always to have a good head of steam, and be ready for a spurt at daybreak, in case daylight might show a cruiser close by, when we would want all the speed he could put on to get beyond reach of her guns.

The next thing to guard against, as much as possible, was the emission during the day of clouds of black smoke. In this matter the cruisers had a decided advantage over the blockade runners. The cruisers used a peculiar kind of anthracite coal, which emitted very little smoke. This particular kind of coal could be obtained only in the United States; and after the war broke out, the strictest prohibitions were put upon it, and it was not allowed to be exported, or used for any other purpose but the United States navy. Therefore cruisers sent up very little smoke, and were not so easily observed at a distance as steamers which burnt soft

coal, and sent up volumes of black smoke. The engineer seemed to understand and appreciate this, and said he would do his best to meet the circumstances.

At daylight next morning I went to the mast-head with the glass, and took a good look round the horizon, but nothing was in sight.

A man was now stationed at the mast-head, to keep a strict look-out, and report anything that might appear on the horizon. The weather was calm, and the sea smooth, but the steamer was making but little over ten knots by the log, at which the captain was much disappointed, and declared that she had made thirteen knots on the passage out from London. When I worked up the position at noon, I found by observation that we were about 180 miles from Havana, which just agreed with the log. The engineer, when giving me an extract from his log, was also rather disappointed at the speed. I reminded him of the great difference in the temperature of the water in the Gulf Stream, which would greatly affect the condensation, and lessen the vacuum. He said he had allowed for that, and still the speed was deficient.

I then referred to the vessel's bottom being foul, and asked how long she had lain in Havana harbour. He said they had lain there about six weeks. I said her bottom must have fouled considerably in that time, which would greatly affect her speed, and she ought to have been docked and cleaned before attempting to run the blockade. This was one of the chief advantages that the blockade runners had over the cruisers—oftener docked.

On talking on this subject to the captain, I learned from his conversation that he had had a good deal of trouble after coming to Havana, and that he had been obliged to sell a part of his vessel to raise the necessary funds to make this trip, and could not afford the means to have the vessel docked. I guessed what his position would be, as I had had some of the same kind of experience myself.

Having been accustomed to a sailing vessel, I felt this steady going along under steam to be somewhat dull and monotonous. There was no variety to keep the mind occupied, nothing to animate in the way of speeding along under a

rattling breeze, or nothing to fret about in the way of light or baffling winds or calms, no hiding from cruisers under bare poles, or creeping out of sight by aid of the long oars. I had often been worried by crosses of that kind, and I now felt unhappy because they did not exist.

It was now a steady, continued state of anxiety; and as nearly every one on board was new to this kind of business, every object seen betwixt sky and water caused alarm, until I told them that I believed that they would be startled at the sight of a sea-gull.

On the third morning an alarm was given at daybreak that a steamer was on the starboard bow close on. I ran on deck, and saw her about five miles distant, but she had already altered her course, and was standing away to the eastward; and from the volume of smoke she was sending up, it was easy to see that she was no cruiser, but a blockade runner, which had taken us for a cruiser, and was standing away from us. We kept on our course, and also sending up a column of smoke, she soon resumed her course, evidently satisfied that we were no cruiser.

We saw nothing more until we were about thirty-five miles to the south-east of Galveston. Here fires were banked, and we lay to, to await nightfall.

About an hour before sunset we saw a cruiser to the eastward. She was a long distance off, and we could only see her masts. She seemed to have come from seawards, and was steering towards Galveston. If she continued on her present course, she would come a little nearer to us, but if she saw us laying still, she might take us for another cruiser and pass on, whereas if we started to run, we would send up a smoke which would betray us.

The captain was a little anxious to know what I intended to do, but I said just to lay still, and not send up any smoke, and watch closely the movements of the cruiser.

In the meantime, the sun being about due west, I got a good observation, which gave me the correct longitude and our exact position, and by a comparison with the position at noon, showed there to be but a very slight current from the westward.

There was no danger of the cruiser overhauling us, even if she was a faster vessel, as it was so near nightfall that she could not get close enough to hold sight of us in the darkness, but a chase would put us to a great disadvantage, as it would put us out of our reckoning if we stood out to sea or to westward, and spoil our chance of getting in that night, and not only shorten our supply of coal, but subject us to danger all the following day while laying to, with cruisers on the alert.

If we stood in, she would be pressing on us when we came near the blockaded port, and it required a little time and caution to find the entrance to the channel, which, from our draught of water, would require great caution if the tide happened to be low.

The cruiser continued on her course for a time, and we thought she was going to pass without noticing us, but shortly before sunset she altered her course, and steered direct towards us.

As soon as this was known, the crew were a little flurried, and the captain was impatient to start. The engineer said he could have a full head of steam in a few minutes.

I was unwilling to alter our position of departure, as I wished to lay a straight course from there to where I intended to strike the coast, and I thought if darkness would close in before the cruiser got within six or seven miles, we would be able to start off on that course without her seeing what direction we took.

As every one seemed impatient to get started, I decided to proceed and steer a straight course W.S.W. and log correctly the distance run; this would keep our distance from the cruiser, so that she would lose sight of us in the darkness and would not see us when we changed our course. This gave satisfaction to all, and the steamer was soon running along at a good speed with the cruiser fully nine miles astern.

As it got dark I was looking astern with the glass to see if we were losing sight of the cruiser, but the smoke from our own funnel falling astern obstructed the view. The engineer was standing by, seeming greatly to enjoy the novelty of a chase. Annoyed at the smoke obstructing my view, I turned

to him and said that I wished him and his black smoke were both in that place where darkness and smoke reigned supreme.

"Where is that? in Glasgow, do you mean?" said he, with a meaning laugh.

I saw he was hinting at my nationality, and I replied that I believed he must have learned his business at that place, and delighted to send up black smoke *in memoria* of it.

"You are not far wrong," said he; "I served my apprenticeship not far from it at a place called Greenock, which perhaps you know; but I can stop that smoke for a short time if you wish."

"I wish you would," said I, "and let me get a good look astern."

He then called to the firemen to open their doors a little and the smoke cleared away. I then took a good look astern, but could not through the darkness discover a trace of the cruiser. The captain also, with his long glass, with which he thought he could see anything, could see nothing of her.

We had now run about six miles on this course, and it was about as dark as it would be. I said if the engineer would now send up a good column of black smoke for a few minutes and then check it quickly, we would under cover of that alter our course and head away direct for Galveston. The engineer said he could easily do that, and soon the funnel was sending out quite a cloud. This was continued for a few minutes, and then suddenly stopped, and at the same moment I brought the steamer's head round and set her course to make the land about five miles west of Galveston. This would take us clear of the blockading fleet, and we could then work up the coast in shallow water until we found the entrance to the Swash Channel. I would have kept more to the westward, and given the fleet a wider berth, had we not been chased by the cruiser, but I wished to take as short a cut as possible and reach the coast before the cruiser, in case she might, as soon as it got dark, have steered straight off for Galveston to reach that port before us and put the fleet on the alert.

The captain, who was very wishful to know the meaning of every movement, asked what was the object of sending up a

dense column of smoke, the thing I had always been so wishful to avoid.

I pointed to the cloud of smoke which still darkened the sky astern, and said would it not be pleasing to think that the cruiser would be steering for that, thinking us away beyond it, while we were now off in another direction.

He seemed greatly pleased with the device, but I told him it might be of no avail, as the Yankees were not easily deceived, and it was possible that as soon as the cruiser lost sight of us when darkness set in she would stand away for Galveston, where she knew we must be bound, and look out for us there; but as she would very likely make for the main entrance, we would stand more to the westward and crawl up close to the beach, and he must be prepared for some dangerous work.

The weather, which had been calm and hot for the last few days, now showed signs of a change. Heavy clouds were banking up to the northward, with occasional flashes of lightning in that direction. This was all in our favour so far, as the wind, if it came, would be off the land, while the dark clouds would shroud us like a veil.

It being the second engineer's watch, the chief came on deck, not wishing to go to sleep as we were coming near the critical point. As much depended upon the engineer, I was desirous of finding out something about his qualifications and experience, as I thought he had more the appearance of a military man than an engineer. I got into conversation with him, and referred to the remark he had made some time before about his having learned his business in Greenock.

He said he had served his apprenticeship in Greenock at Scott and Sinclair's works; that he had subsequently, through some mad freak, enlisted in a cavalry regiment, in which he served for some years, which accounted for his military appearance.

So far as I could make out he seemed to have been a man of good family and well educated, but something of a scapegrace.

I had previously warned him of the draught of the vessel being almost too much for the channel through which we would have to pass, and requested that in using his coal he

would keep the vessel trimmed so as to have her as near even keel as possible.

He now asked me when we would get into this shallow water, and if we should be stirring up the mud?

I said if all went well we would be stirring up mud before an hour.

He hastened below to get his boilers pumped up before we got into the muddy water; I saw from this that he knew what he was about, and that gave me confidence.

It was now very dark, and we took a cast of the lead and found we were in thirteen fathoms of water; we kept on, keeping a sharp look on the starboard bow for the blockading fleet until we got into four fathoms. We then slowed, and kept on till we got into three fathoms.

We now changed course to the eastward, and moved along slowly, keeping in three fathoms, which led us to a course about E.N.E. This was all right, and I looked with some anxiety for a light on a high building in Galveston known to blockade runners as the "light on Hanley's buildings," but could see nothing of it. I wondered if that light had been discontinued. There were some reports that the Federal fleet was going to bombard the building on account of the aid given by the light to blockade runners, but it would be difficult to get near enough to throw shot with any accuracy.

I was just beginning to wonder whether the light had been discontinued, or I had made a bad landfall, when the light was seen. It was not far off, but dim, probably from the scarcity of oil. From the direction it bore from where we were—in three fathoms of water—the entrance to the channel would be about half a mile distant, and there must be a gunboat at anchor close by on our starboard bow.

For some time there had not been a breath of wind, and the sea was calm, and there was not much sound of breakers on the beach, but the wind was now beginning to come in gusts off the land, and there was every appearance of a storm, probably a norther. This was also favourable to us, as the blockading fleet would have swung out to seawards, and seeing the weather looking threatening they would be engaged paying out chain and otherwise making snug.

We drew as close up to the land as we could with safety, and moved along slowly, keeping the lead going on the port side, and soon got into the channel, which was perfectly smooth, but with barely eight feet of water, it being nearly low water. I knew that this was the deepest end of the channel, and that near the inner end there was a short space where there was nearly a foot less, and very likely we should there take the ground. However, when there we should be pretty safe from the blockading fleet, and from the easy way that we had dropped into the channel I suspected the tide was rising.

This I explained to the captain and the engineer that they might be prepared for it, at the same time I assured them that there was no danger.

We kept on going slow, and the water, as I expected, shoaled down to seven feet, and the vessel stuck and the engines were stopped. I was not altogether satisfied at the position we were in, I had never known the water to be so low in this channel before, and we had not seen, and I could not now make out with the glass, any of the blockading vessels, and I hoped I had made no mistake and got into the wrong channel, or some *cul de sac*. I had gone out twice by this channel, but never before came in by it. I felt slightly uneasy, and ordered the small boat to be lowered. As soon as the boat touched the water she swung forward towards the bow of the steamer. This assured me that the tide was making. I took two hands with me and took soundings. We found about the same depth of water for about one length ahead, after that it deepened. I could also, by the aid of the lightning, make out the fort on the port bow. This showed we were all right, and as the tide was rising we should soon get in.

When I returned on board I told the captain that the tide was low but rising fast; that by working the engines we could push through into the deeper water, but I thought it just as well to lay still and make no noise for half-an-hour, when we would float over quite easy. There was little danger from the enemy, as we were now in past the fleet, and within three hundred yards of the Confederate guard-boat.

The engineer said he would work the engines if we desired

it, but he did not like stirring up the mud as it would get into his condenser and boilers if we were long in getting off, and he would rather we would wait a little till the tide rose, that was if we were quite safe from capture.

"Quite safe," said I, "if you don't begin sending out your black smoke, or hissing off your steam; but mind, the Yankees are sharp, and if they smell your smoke or hear steam blowing off we may have a boat with an armed crew alongside before we can get out of their way, and as I nearly drowned a boat's crew very near this spot not long ago I have no wish to have another such encounter."

Just then I heard the captain cry out, "Stop, there; where are you going?" and ran to stop some men who were making their way to the boat which had been left alongside.

This was some of the firemen and trimmers trying to slip into the boat and desert the vessel. Their reason for so doing they could not well explain. They said they did not want to be captured, made prisoners, shipwrecked, worked to death, starved, and otherwise ill-treated and abused, all of which they had been on board of this vessel, and they refused to return to their duty.

On my asking the engineer what they meant, he said that some of the firemen and trimmers had been picked up about the grog-shops at Havana, and a more worthless and despicable set he had never seen. They were recent imports into Havana, of that class of loafers and sea lawyers which infest sea-ports, and had come to Havana to prey upon the blockade runners. They had never intended to make the trip, but to get their advance and then desert, but the laws in Havana were strict, and he had been able to prevent them. They had feigned to be sick, done little work, and caused much trouble and extra work to others on the passage over, and they now wanted to get ashore to get drink.

I laughed, and said it was evident that they knew nothing of the place they had come to, or they would not seek to desert their ship. They would find little drink ashore at this place, and more kicks than sympathy. I told the captain in their hearing that I thought the best thing he could do was to let them go; when they got ashore the Provost-guard would take

charge of them and conscript them into the Confederate service, which was an excellent place for straightening up into good behaviour such fellows as them, and he, the captain, would be a fool if he afforded them any protection or plea for exemption as being a part of his crew.

This rather abashed them, and the captain, seeing this, told them that as they had refused to obey him and do their duty, they were quite at liberty to go, and he added, at my instigation, that if they did not go now he would hand them over to the Provost-guard as soon as the vessel got into Galveston. On hearing this they sneaked off and went down to the stoke hole.

The rising tide had now caused the steamer to float, and the engines were set in motion and we were soon into nine feet of water, and soon after into thirteen feet. This was the main channel, and the course was changed to north-west. The storm which had been threatening had now come on, and the rain was pouring down in torrents, and we soon reached the guard-boat, which we hailed in the midst of a violent thunderstorm.

There was now nothing exciting in the arrival of a blockade runner at Galveston, there had been so many of them lately. Having satisfied themselves that we were all right, they told us to anchor and await the boarding officers.

We passed on a little further to give room for a good swing of chain, keeping clear of the *Westfield* wreck, where I told the mate to anchor, warning him at the same time that it would very likely blow hard for a few hours, and to give her plenty of chain, as if she drifted she would drift right into the midst of the Yankee fleet. The mate, I believe, put down every anchor he had.

It was now about 2 a.m., the rain had ceased, but a strong northerly gale was blowing, and it had become bitter cold. I had been drenched to the skin by the rain, and as soon as I saw everything all right, and the anchor watch set, I went below to get some dry clothes on.

The captain whose mind had been in such a state of suspense during the passage, that he had seldom entered into anything like conversation, now came down to the cabin quite relieved

and in high spirits, and after some congratulations began to throw off his oilskins, observing at the same time that he wondered why I was not provided with those things. "You see," said he, "if you had had a suit like that it would have saved you that drenching you got."

I said that I found them too hot for this climate.

"Hot!" said he, "you don't call this hot; this is surely a cold climate you have brought us to."

"It is rather colder in winter than in Havana," said I, "but this is not the usual climate here even in winter, this is one of those cold winds called northers, which sweep over the country and the Gulf occasionally during winter; and I have just now been thinking it a strange coincidence, that the last time I came in here in December last, we had one of the same, and a hard time of it we had warping up that channel in the very teeth of it, till we came to anchor in this very spot."

"How often have you run the blockade into Galveston?"

"This makes my fourth trip into Texas, and my third into Galveston."

"Well, I can assure you, that I am glad that we have got in safe. Do you know that I think I never endured such a painful suspense, as I have done during the last few days?"

"What would you think," said I, "of a passage of eighteen days as I had in the middle of last summer, with fourteen hours' daylight out of the twenty-four?"

"That would have killed me altogether," said he. "What was you doing all that time?"

"Laying becalmed, with our sails down about half of the time, keeping a look out from the masthead, and when we saw anything upon the horizon, pulling out of sight with the sweeps."

"Well," said he, "don't you think we have been fortunate in getting in so easily?"

"We have been very fortunate," said I. "We saw only one cruiser, and that at a time when we could easily get out of her way, and this dark night favoured us in getting past the fleet. We never saw any of the blockading vessels."

"I hope we may get out as easily. Is there as much danger in going out as in coming in?"

"Not near so much," said I, and when I explained to him the difference, he seemed so happy that I thought he would have talked the whole night; but I reminded him that he might have a busy time when daylight came, and I suggested that he should take a few hours' sleep, and we both retired.

Shortly after daylight the boarding-officers came on board, and the usual formalities were gone through, and we steamed up to the harbour.

There was now much more stir about the harbour at Galveston than what had been during the past summer, although there was no substantial improvement of things in general, rather the opposite. The general scramble seemed to have become more desperate, and blockade running was now carried on to a reckless degree. Some five or six steamers were loading at the wharfs, and arrivals and sailings were quite frequent.

At this time I often heard it remarked, and it was perhaps worthy of remark, how a profitable investment or enterprise might be for a long time overlooked or neglected, because no one chooses to make the venture, but when once started a general rush is made and it is often pushed to a reckless extent, and often persevered in long after it has ceased to be safe or profitable.

During the early part of the war, and prior to the capture of Galveston by the Federals in 1862, the blockade of Galveston had been little more than formal. An old sailing vessel named the *Santee*, little better than a hulk, and said to be without a rudder, was anchored off the inlet to Galveston to serve as a blockade, and forbade all ingress or egress to the port. So little experience had the Texans at that time, of war and its contingencies, that although much privation might have been averted and large fortunes been realized with very little risk, they never made any attempt at passage in or out, considering the declaration of blockade and the old hulk an effective veto.

Now, a fleet of from twelve to fifteen heavily armed steamers lay off the port, and a number of fast cruisers patrolled the waters in the neighbourhood of the port, and cruised all over the Gulf of Mexico, overhauling and capturing vessels where-

ever they found them, yet in the face of all this, notwithstanding, the number of steamers and schooners that passed in and out was almost incredible.

I have heard much said about the traffic between Nassau N. P. and Charleston and the other Atlantic ports, but I believe that was far exceeded by the traffic in the Gulf of Mexico, during the latter part of the war, after the Atlantic ports had been captured by the Federals. 'Tis true that many were captured, but still the proportion that went free was very great.

It was a common expression among blockade runners at that time that they could afford to give the Yankees a prize now and then to encourage them to maintain the blockade and keep up the price of cotton, and a common toast at some of their convivial meetings was:—

"The Confederates that produces the cotton; the Yankees that maintain the blockade and keep up the price of cotton; the Britishers that buy the cotton and pay the high price for it. Here is to all three, and a long continuance of the war, and success to blockade runners."

CHAPTER XXIII.

On shore at Galveston — Appointed to another steamer — The steamer *Jeannette* — Short of coal — Sail for Tampico — An exciting chase — Arrival at Tampico.

AS soon as the *Phœnix* was alongside of the wharf at Galveston, my duties and responsibilities were over for the inward trip, and it would be several weeks before she would be discharged, loaded, and ready for sea.

The vessel and cargo were consigned to Mr. H., the same gentleman who had aided me by his counsel in my dispute with the Messrs. M. on my second trip, but I had nothing to do with the shore business this trip, which was a source of *great* relief to me. Having, therefore, nothing to do I was *much* in company with the officers of the other steamers,

then in port, and as those engaged in this calling were always ready to aid each other, I got some information which would be useful to me on the passage out.

There was at the time lying at the wharf a paddle steamer, named the *Jeannette*, which was already loaded and cleared for sea. She had sailed out about the time of our arrival, but meeting with bad weather, and one of her boiler-tubes having given out, she had put back and returned to Galveston on the following night.

A few days after our arrival Mr. H. sent for me, and asked if I would be willing to take the command of this vessel, and take her to Tampico. He said her present captain was in rather an unfortunate position. He lived at Houston, and some of his family were seriously ill; and although it was of great importance that the vessel should sail immediately he, Mr. H., did not like to ask Captain S. to leave his family in their present helpless condition, and although Captain S. had that day expressed his willingness to sail immediately, he believed that was only because of some idle and undeserved remarks which had been made, about his having put back into Galveston after being out through the blockading fleet. He said he had a high regard for Captain S., and felt very much for him, and that he had already talked the matter over with Captain R. of the *Phœnix*, and proposed that I should take out the *Jeannette*, and Captain S. would take my place as sailing master of the *Phœnix* for the outward trip. This would allow him a longer stay in port with his family, and Captain R. had consented.

If I would agree to this they would allow me a hundred dollars extra over my present agreement, and the cost of a passage from Tampico to Havana on the mail steamer. He explained that the boiler tubes of the *Jeannette* were in bad order, and a new set had been ordered which had arrived at Havana, but owing to this mishap, and having to put back, she had used up so much of her coal that she had not sufficient left to take her to Havana. It was therefore necessary to take her to Tampico as the nearest neutral port, and the tubes would be sent from Havana to Tampico, and the boilers retubed at that place.

I was rather averse to taking command of a steamer with defective boilers, but I was assured that since she had put back into Galveston, all defective tubes had been taken out and the boilers made quite sufficient to take her to Tampico.

Having assured myself of this, an arrangement was made to the satisfaction of all parties and I agreed to start at once. I was to take full command as captain, and they were to send a supercargo to take charge of the cargo when landed.

A note of the change of masters was made on the crew list by the Consul at Galveston, it being thought best not to make any record of it upon the register in a blockaded port.

When I came to examine the vessel I had taken charge of, I found her to be a sharp little steamer drawing a little over five feet of water when loaded; she seemed to have undergone much hard work. I found by her register that she had been built on the Clyde, and had plyed on that river between Glasgow and Rothesay—her original name had been the *Eagle*. She had been purchased to run the blockade, and after making several trips had been captured and taken to New York, condemned in a prize court and sold, afterwards brought out to Havana, again put under the British flag and named the *Jeannette*, and this was the second or third trip between Havana and Galveston.

She was considerably altered in her inward arrangements. Her passengers' saloon was converted into an after-hold, her stewards' refreshment rooms into a forehold, the small ladies' cabin aft was now used as a cabin for the officers, and the steerage forward as a forecastle for the crew. The after part of the paddle-boxes were stripped of the planking, to allow the water to go free from the paddles in heavy seas. She was considered a pretty swift vessel, but owing to a number of tubes in her boilers being at the time shut off, her steaming power was somewhat reduced. She had what is called a haystack boiler standing high above her deck, an oscillating engine, and her light draft of water made her very suitable for running the blockade into Galveston. It was therefore desirable that her boilers should be retubed, and the vessel got ready for business without delay. I was therefore directed to sail as soon as possible.

It now seemed to me that blockade running between Havana and Galveston had been largely taken up by companies or syndicates who owned several vessels, and whose policy seemed to be to play a high stake, by running their vessels harder, taking up less time in precaution, and doing a large trade, and in event of a capture now and then to apportion the loss with the profits. This policy was no doubt more applicable to steamers whose working expenses were high, but I question much if this system of combination and venture was as successful as the more cautious policy adopted by private individuals, barring of course the losses sustained by the latter in the business transactions.

Having now a steamer there was no detention in waiting for a favourable wind, a dark night being all that was necessary; and it being now near the end of the moon, we soon got everything ready, left the harbour about 8 p.m., and steamed slowly down the bay, the policy being to confine steam and proceed slow and make little noise or smoke, until we got abreast of, or past, the blockading fleet, and then dash off at full speed.

I may here observe that such tactics accounted much for the success of so many steamers getting through the blockade.

The blockade runners with help from the shore knew shallow passages which the blockading vessels could not approach, on account of their draught of water. These passages could generally be entered from some point near the shore. The light draught of the blockade-running steamers enabled them to keep at some distance from the fleet, and on a dark night their low hulls were obscured by the dark loom of the land beyond.

Coming up slowly and noiselessly they were generally up with, or past the fleet before they could be observed, and with caution they often passed without being observed, and if observed, having their steam confined ready for a spurt, they got quickly away in the darkness, and if on the inward run they were soon under cover of the Forts. If on the outward run they were still better prepared for a spurt, and even if fired upon they knew that it was generally done hurriedly and partly at random, and if the first shot did not take fatal effect

they were in less danger from those that followed as the smoke of the first shot made the darkness thicker, and shrouded them from view, and they were soon away out of sight in the darkness. They might be chased, but with their speed and the advantage of a dark night they might laugh at their pursuers.

I must confess that I felt a little nervous at first; the steamer seemed so much longer and more unwieldy to handle in the narrow channel than the little schooner. I soon found, however, that this was more than compensated for by the advantage the steamer had in a steady command of headway, and her readiness to turn in any direction without regard to the direction of the wind. I had also found out by this time more about the channel, and at the outer end where the first gunboat lay, that there was sufficient water to allow us to pass closer to the shore if there was not much sea on.

Having got safely into the Swash channel, we stood along, keeping as close as possible to the shore side of the channel. The breakers were sounding loud enough to drown the noise of our paddle wheels, and the land beyond completely darkened the low hull of the steamer, and it now seemed plain to me that the steamer, showing little above her decks, would be less apt to be observed than the schooner with her cloud of canvas.

I could make out with the glass two of the blockading vessels, the nearest was just about the same place as on my two former trips, and I remembered, with some satisfaction, that there was no moon to break through and light up the scene this time.

Having brought the last gunboat on the port quarter, we set off at full speed, intending to stand square off the coast until daylight, and then if nothing was in sight, shape the course straight for Tampico.

I had scarcely spoken to any one on board yet, except the mate and the engineer; I now called all hands, and the watches were set. The steamer was making about twelve knots by the log, the engineer stating that his supply of coals was limited, and in the present condition of the boilers he did not wish to drive her too hard. I therefore concluded to

shorten the run as much as possible, and, after getting about thirty miles off the coast, I directed the course straight for Tampico, wishing to save coal as much as possible, in case we might be chased out of our course.

All went well throughout the night, and when daylight broke nothing could be seen, and all was favourable so far. As the day advanced a strong breeze sprung up from north-east, and as this was almost a fair wind for us we set the jib, which helped her a little, and all seemed to be going well when about 1 p.m. a cruiser was seen to leeward; she bore about W.S.W., distant about ten or twelve miles. The position she was in was very much to our disadvantage, our course was about S.S.W. There was a stiff breeze and a heavy sea from north-east. If we stood away from her we should have to breast a heavy wind and sea, which with our short supply of coal was not to be thought of. To continue on our course she would cut us off, or at least come very close to us, and we saw by the way she was shaping her course that such was her intention. The mate was certain that if we could get to leeward of her we would soon leave her astern. I was satisfied of that myself, but the difficulty was to get past her without coming under the range of her guns.

The best we could do in the meantime was to alter our course to about south by east, and keep more away from her until we were certain we could cross her bow without coming within the range of her shot. We soon found, however, that this course brought us rather more into the trough of the sea, which had now got pretty high, and we had to keep her away a little. The whole question now depended upon the speed of the respective vessels. We were certainly the fastest vessel, but, being a paddle steamer, having to lay partly side to the seas was to our disadvantage. The cruiser being a propeller had the sea nearly abeam, which was in her favour.

The winds kept steady from the north-east, and the sea was pretty high. The mate was on the bridge with me, and as he gazed on the large seas coming up quartering, would often say, "Oh, if we could once get her before those seas, would not they make her propeller whirr!"

Of course that was our object, but to gain this advantage we

should have to cross the bows of our pursuer, and we must get sufficient distance to enable us to do this with safety.

I had carefully watched the position of the two vessels from the time the chase began. The wind kept steady at north-east. When we first sighted the cruiser she bore W.S.W., distant about twelve miles. We had sailed about south half east, and at 2.30 had run about eighteen miles by the log. The cruiser now bore about due west, and was distant fully four miles, this showed that we had run the greatest distance, but driving so hard with a heavy sea partly on the beam, was both to our disadvantage and danger, but we had not yet sufficient room to cross her track, and we must keep on our course a little longer.

About 3 p.m. we had brought her nearly north-west, and distant fully three miles, and we came round so as to bring the wind and sea nearly astern; this made a marked difference in our sailing, we went along smooth and easy with increased speed. It brought us, however, for a time closer to our pursuer. We now required all the speed we could put on, and our foresail was set to help her along.

"Now," said the mate, "you will see us leave her astern."

"Don't holloa till you are out of the wood," said one of the men, as the report of a gun was heard from the cruiser, and a ball whistled near to us.

The cruiser had altered her course, and was now sailing parallel with us, and being broadside on to us we could see that she was a short vessel, and being before the wind and sea, she was pitching heavily and throwing her propeller out of water. This was just the position we wished to get her into, as her speed would now be greatly impeded, while ours would be increased, but the seaman's warning to the mate was not without cause. The cruiser kept firing with what seemed to be a small rifled gun, which sent shot to a great distance, some of them even passing over and falling beyond us, but all very wide of the mark, and I was just in the act of saying, by way of encouragement, to the men, that the cruiser was rolling too much to throw shot with any accuracy, when a shot struck our funnel, passing through it about three feet above the crown of the boiler. This was rather dangerous, as had that shot

been a little lower it would have perforated the boiler. The men looked at me, but I put the best face I could on the matter, and observing that the deck-load of cotton protected the boiler a good way up; I told them to bring a few bales from the forward and after parts of the deck-load and pack over the exposed part of the boiler.

The mate took some hands and set quickly about getting this done, telling the men at the same time that that was only a chance shot, and they could not do it again to save their lives, and it seemed to have been chance as all the shots that followed either fell short or went wide of us. The mate had soon a large pile of cotton bales all round and over the boiler. The hole through the funnel was not over three inches in diameter, showing that it was a gun of very small calibre they were using, and soon every shot was falling short, and we were getting fast beyond range.

Suddenly the engineer came running up to say that the vessel was buckling amidship. I looked and saw her bending up at the bow and stern, as she pitched in the seas. The taking away of the cotton bales from the bow and stern to place round the boiler had lightened her too much at the bow and stern, and weighted her too heavily amidships, and this caused her to strain in running before a heavy sea.

All hands were immediately set to roll out bales towards the bow and stern to stiffen the vessel, and this was rather difficult work in a heavy sea. Fortunately the cruiser had now fallen astern out of range, and had ceased firing, and we got the deck-load arranged, and the vessel properly trimmed again. I saw from this incident the great importance of having the weight properly distributed on such fragile vessels.

The cruiser was now fully five miles astern, but she still kept up the chase, with the view no doubt of keeping us in sight in case of some chance accident which might cause a falling off in our speed, such as a boiler tube giving way, which was not an uncommon incident, and was the cause of several captures, and the Yankees were well aware of the likelihood of such mishaps on this class of steamers. Fortunately nothing happened; all went well, and towards sunset the wind fell, and

the sea began to go down, and when darkness set in, I put the steamer upon her proper course again.

The wind died away during the night, and in the morning the sea was calm, and nothing was to be seen from the masthead.

I was now wishful to ascertain our position: we had been running out of our course, but as part of the time we had been running to the south of it, and the other part to the north of it, we might not be far out of our way. At noon I found by observation that we were about seventy miles north-east of Tampico. We were now out of the track most frequented by the cruisers, but as they sometimes hovered out round Tampico, a strict look out was kept from the masthead, but nothing was seen all day.

About 5 p.m. we sighted Mount Tamana, on the starboard bow, bearing about west, and by sunset we could discover some ships anchored in the roads off Tampico, one of which was a large vessel which we supposed to be a French transport. We took her bearings and steered straight for her, coming up cautiously in the darkness, until we saw her anchor light, and about 8 p.m. we anchored close to her.

All was now well for this trip so far, but I had not yet forgot my experience at this place six months previous, and it now came up in my mind that it was then the equinox in September, and it was now the equinox in March, and I gave orders, as the night was calm, to put very little chain out, the engineer to bank his fires and keep steam up, and everything in readiness to get under weigh in short time, and a double anchor watch was set to keep a strict look out on the weather, and report immediately the slightest appearance of any change or indication of a norther.

Few of the crew had been at Tampico before, and they did not understand the meaning of such extraordinary precautions. I got but little sleep that night, for the watch continued to call me from time to time to observe some little passing cloud or other imaginary indication of a change. This I believe they did out of pure mischief, in retaliation for my having enjoined such precautions, and setting a double anchor watch. Of course I could find no fault after having given such strict orders.

If a norther had come it would have been very awkward for us as we would have to put to sea, and lay to until it was over, and our small supply of coal might have been exhausted; I was, therefore, very glad to see the weather continue fine.

About 9 a.m. the pilot come on board, but I could not prevail upon him to take the steamer in over the bar before the afternoon, when the tide would be full.

I was very anxious to get in, and pressed him hard, and explained our lack of coal and the danger of a norther. It was no use, however, to try to put a Mexican past his usual jog-trot, and we had to wait.

The weather continued fine, however, and about 2 p.m. the pilot returned, and the steamer slipped easily in over the bar, and we passed up the river and anchored off the town. It was very fortunate that we had got in, as there was not sufficient coal left to have steamed six hours longer; and whilst it was pleasing to think of the short time in which we had made the trip from Galveston, as compared to the long and tedious passages on the schooner, there was also some cause to reflect on how it might have been with us in such a vessel if we had been chased far out of our course by a cruiser and got short of coal, or a norther had caused us to put to sea before we got in over the bar.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Waiting at Tampico for orders—Seized with small-pox—My old friend the Yankee captain—Startling news—Death of Lincoln—Surrender of General Lee—General surmises as to the situation—I leave for Havana—Find on arrival there a United States fleet entering the harbour—A demand on the Spanish Government by the United States—Critical state of affairs—Total collapse of the Confederacy—End of blockade running.

THE business of consigning and disposing of the cargo being in the hands of the supercargo, I had nothing to do with it, and after the cotton was landed there was little for the crew to do; and as the mail steamer was about to leave

for Havana, part of the crew were paid off, and the price of a passage allowed them, that they might go by it to their original port of shipment, one or two being retained to do the necessary work on the vessel while in port.

The cargo was consigned to a Mexican firm, and they had received advices by the mail that, anticipating the safe arrival of the *Jeannette* at Tampico, the tubes had been sent on from Havana by a schooner which had been specially chartered, and which also took a supply of coal to bring the steamer up to Havana.

As soon as I got an opportunity, I went to see Messrs. G. and Co. about the cotton I had brought out on the second trip and consigned to them for shipment to Liverpool.

I found neither of the partners at home, one having gone to Europe, and the other to San Louis Potosi, in the interior.

The managing clerk, a German, said that the cotton had been shipped, about a month previous, on their own vessel, and the account of charges had been sent with it. He could tell me nothing about the amount of the charges—at least, he said so—or the rate of freight. He told me, however, that the cotton was insured in Bremen for 36,500 dollars.

I remarked that this was far above the value of the cotton, and desired to know the amount of premium of insurance and commission on insurance; but he was rather evasive on that point, and that Mr. G. would give me all the particulars when he returned from the interior. In the meantime, he represented to me how much I would be a gainer in recovering such a large sum for the cotton in event of the vessel being lost.

When I thought of the eventuality on which such gain depended, it gave rise to some reflections.

I had been accustomed to baffle with seas and enemies, with the conscious certainty that, in case of capture, wreck, or other failure, I would sustain heavy loss, and probably worse misfortune; whereas, if I accomplished the voyage successfully, I should be well recompensed, and no one the loser, and many benefited.

It now seemed to me strange to find, on this second, and what was called at the time, legitimate, shipment, the case reversed.

If the voyage was successfully accomplished, and the cotton sold in the regular way, I knew that the price obtained for it would not amount to much more than half of the sum it was insured for, while the charges heaped upon it by middle-men would swallow up a large portion of the proceeds, and leave me but a small balance; whereas, if the vessel was lost, I should be a gainer, by obtaining in the gross for my goods much more than their value, but the consequence of this would be unjust loss to others, and perhaps the loss of many lives. Yet, strange to say, the former was considered as contraband, and by some an unholy trade, and those engaged in it regarded as a set of reckless, lawless fellows, subject to be shot or drowned for their tricks, while the latter was entitled lawful and honourable business.

I did not then understand what object Messrs. G. and Co. could have in insuring the cotton for such a large amount without my knowledge or wish; but I subsequently found this out, when in the bill of charges appeared the percentages on that sum in the shape of premiums, brokerage, commissions, &c.

Returning to my duties, I had now to await the arrival of the schooner with the tubes for the boiler, and coal, and further instructions from Havana.

In the course of a few days the schooner arrived, and with her also came workmen to do the repairs, which were at once proceeded with.

At this time there was an epidemic of small-pox at Tampico, but as the inhabitants were used to such things, little notice was taken of it. One of my men, however, was seized with the disease, and was taken ashore to a private house, where I visited him once or twice to see that he was properly cared for.

When the next mail arrived, I received a letter instructing me to leave the *Jeannette*, while the repairs were being done, in charge of the captain of the schooner, and come up at once to Havana upon the mail steamer. I understood from this that I was wanted for another trip from Havana to Galveston, and I would have gone at once, but for the last few days I had felt exceedingly unwell, and had taken up quarters on shore. On

consulting a doctor, he said I must not think of going, as he feared it was a case of small-pox. This turned out to be the fact, but mine was rather a mild case. It, however, shut me off from all business and communication with others for about three weeks, during which time I knew nothing of what was going on outside.

I had recovered, but was not yet allowed to go out, and one day was sitting in a balcony overlooking the street, looking out for some English-speaking personage, from whom I might learn the latest news, when I saw, coming along the street, a person having the appearance of an American seafaring man; and as he came nearer, I recognized the captain of the Yankee brig, whom I had met nine months before at Havana, from whom I had purchased the boat and other articles.

I hailed him, and he looked up, but he did not recognize me at first, but I called his recollections to our meeting at Havana. He was quite pleased to meet me, and started to come up, but I warned him not to come in case of infection, but asked how he was, and where he had left his brig.

He said his vessel was anchored in the roads taking on board dye-wood. He was just about to sail, and was getting his clearance; glad he was to get away, as it was a bad place to lay, and a poor chance for trade in this place.

I said I had been shut off from the world for about three weeks, and had heard nothing of what was going on, and I asked him what was the latest news.

"The latest news!" said he. "Have you not heard it? Why, Lincoln has been assassinated!"

"What?" I cried; but before I could say more, he added that General Lee had surrendered with about 40,000 men.

I was struck with astonishment, and asked first the particulars about Lincoln's assassination.

He could not tell me much about it, but said that gold had fallen to 150 in New York; and he asked if I knew of any one in this place who would be likely to have any greenbacks, as he might buy them.

I directed him to a certain ship-chandler who, I knew, had some, having got them from American seamen, and he had offered them to me at a low figure.

The Yankee noted the address, and started off with the view of doing a little trade.

The characteristics displayed by this Yankee I found to be general among many of them throughout this war. While patriotic and zealous as a nation, and indomitable in their determination to maintain the Union, their individual proclivities for trade were so dominant, that one thought at times their actions must be rather a strain on their patriotism. They could, however, generally meet this with some sound argument. Many of the keenest blockade runners were Yankees; these, however, professed great sympathy with the South. Many of them had resided in, or had been connected with, the Southern States before the war, and I have no doubt they were often sincere.

I could easily account for the desire to buy up greenbacks. The last reports I had heard of the price of gold was that it had reached 270 per cent. premium in New York, and in Havana and the other Gulf ports, United States currency—or greenbacks, as the notes were called—were at such a discount that three dollars of it was readily given for one dollar in gold.

The news was rather startling to me, and I hastened to ascertain the truth and full particulars. There was no dispute about it; the report of the assassination of Lincoln was confirmed, as also the account of the surrender of General Lee and his army.

As I have already observed, the seaports of the Bahamas, Cuba, and Mexico were at this time thronged with temporary sojourners, consisting of Yankees, Southerners, British subjects, Germans, and other nationalities—all intent on doing a stroke of business in connection with the war. Many of these speculated in currency, bonds, cotton, and other commodities, of which the market value rose or fell according to the success of either of the conflicting forces. It may, therefore, be well imagined that rumours from reliable sources, of great victories, crushing defeats, and important successes of the one or the other side, were constantly being manufactured and circulated by way of bulls or bears.

The news of Lee's surrender, however, was so authentic

that no room was left for doubt. Although many still adhered to the belief that, disastrous as it was to the Southern cause, it did not, as a consequence, involve the overthrow of the Confederacy; and the Proconfederates strove to maintain that it was only a move of expediency or strategy, whereby the greater part of Lee's army would be transferred to General Johnson's army, who was then in such a position, that with re-enforcements he would be able to strike a fatal and decisive blow, which would at once turn the whole fortune of the war in favour of the South.

Among other reports was one got up by the Proconfederates in Mexico, that it was the determination of Generals Kirby Smith and Magruder, commanding the forces west of the Mississippi River, that, rather than submit to the authority of the United States, they would claim for Texas, as a part of Mexico, the same right to sever her connection with the United States, and again become independent, or annex to Mexico, as she had in 1837, when she severed her connection with Mexico, and joined the United States, and to effect this they would form an alliance with Maximilian's Government in Mexico.

As I had but little faith in such reports and propositions, I took passage by the mail steamer to Havana, in order to find out with more certainty the true state of matters.

On the steamer were many passengers from Tampico, Vera Cruz, and other places, on their way to Havana. They were mostly of the speculative class I have referred to, and many and animated were the discussions as to the truth of the reports, and whether the war would or would not be terminated, and what might be the issue.

As the steamer approached Havana, a large flotilla of United States war-vessels—among which were several powerful monitors—were seen passing the Moro and entering the harbour. What the meaning and object of this formidable warlike demonstration could be was now the general conjecture.

The flotilla entered the harbour, and anchored in front of the town; and about the same time our steamer came to an anchor; and shortly afterwards her passengers got on shore, each one eager to learn the cause of this great display of United States naval force in Havana harbour.

The cause of this demonstration soon got to be known. There had been for some time previously a formidable ironclad ram, named the *Stonewall Jackson*, built by some foreign nation for the Confederate Government. She was brought to Havana, and placed at the head of the bay, alongside of the *Harriet Lane*, with the object of the two vessels being taken to sea together, armed and commissioned to act against the United States. These vessels still lay there.

The United States Government, on the grounds of the Confederacy being now defunct, had—perhaps a little prematurely—despatched a formidable fleet to Havana, to make a peremptory demand upon the Captain-General of Cuba to deliver up these two vessels to the commander of the fleet, in the name of the United States.

It was in the morning when this fleet entered the harbour; and throughout the day exciting rumours were flying about, as to the probability of an immediate rupture between the United States and the Spanish authorities, and a conflict between their respective forces.

The first rumour that was noised around was that the United States commander had made a peremptory demand for the immediate delivering up of those two vessels, and adding, in a menacing tone, that he was there with his fleet to enforce these demands.

To this the Captain-General had replied that there was the Moro Castle and other forts commanding the harbour, and there was his fleet of good ships, and when he had silenced the Moro Castle and other forts and sunk his ships, he might take the vessels.

It must be understood that the general feeling in Havana was rather in favour of the Confederacy, and there was in it a large Confederate element of a class particularly well fitted to get up such sensational reports; therefore such reports might be taken for what they were worth.

There was, however, some colour to be given to those rumours by a considerable display of activity on board of the Spanish war-vessels, which consisted of three large frigates and some smaller vessels, some of which were moved, and placed in position in front of the two Confederate vessels. There was

also seeming preparations on the Moro and the other forts which commanded the harbour, and matters looked somewhat threatening; and I suppose that a good many of the same class and calling as myself were eagerly looking on, with the expectation—and perhaps hope—of seeing war break out in this new quarter.

The day passed over, however, without any event, and on the following morning the newspapers gave an account of the affair. The statement in the *Diario del Marino* was that the United States Consul, accompanied by the Commander of the United States fleet, called upon the Captain-General, and demanded the immediate delivery of the two Confederate vessels, on the grounds that the Confederacy, as a power, did no longer exist, and all property which had pertained to the late Confederacy was now claimed by the United States, and that the Commander was present with a powerful naval force to enforce this demand.

To this the Captain-General replied that, if he might believe the reports of certain newspapers, the Confederate States had ceased to exist, but he could not act on such reports, and that he must have official instructions from his Government before he could accede to the demand; and if force were resorted to, he must make use of what force he had at his command to resist it, and maintain the honour of the Spanish nation.

It must be remembered that in those days there were no marine cables, and the quickest means of conveying intelligence from Havana to either Washington or Madrid was by the ordinary mail route.

The position was somewhat awkward. The United States commander could not fail to see the justice of the position taken by the Captain-General, but his orders were imperative. The Captain-General was firm, and his resources for defence were sufficient to warrant him to maintain his position.

For a few days matters looked critical, and among the foreign element there was considerable excitement, and each side had their respective partizans.

The feeling of the North had been somewhat embittered against Havana, owing to the sympathy which was supposed to exist there in favour of the South, and its being the haunt

of some swaggering loafers, who had fled thither to be away from danger, and where they might boast in the Confederate cause, and avail themselves of any opportunity which might offer, to insult any United States officer or citizen, where they might do so with impunity.

Among the staid old Spanish merchants there was very little excitement. They had no fear of any conflict, but wondered whether the United States, while claiming the assets of the Confederate States, would not also assume the liabilities.

After a few days' negotiation, the Powers came to an understanding, and there was no further danger of any conflict. The excitement passed over, and about the same time came the news of Johnston's surrender, and the total collapse of the Confederacy; and of course blockade running, which was now being carried on upon an extensive scale between Havana and Galveston, was all at once brought to a termination; and the large number of swift steamers recently brought to Havana to run the blockade were left without occupation, many of them never getting a chance to make a trip; others, expressly built at great expense, newly finished and fitted out, arrived at the scene after all was over. This is what Mr. Weller senior would have called "a rather sudden pull-up"—and so it must be with my narrative.

The exciting trade was now over, and those who had been engaged in it had to betake themselves to other occupations. As for the large fleet of blockade-running steamers thrown idle at Havana, it would be difficult to say what became of them all; some returned to the ports they came from, others were sold and fitted out for various trades, and some lay long without being utilized for anything; and I apprehend that there must have been considerable loss occasioned by this sudden break-up, which would somewhat counterbalance the profits that had been previously earned.

As regards my own losses and successes, I had now to settle up with my partner, and that could not be done until we got the account of the sales of our cotton at Liverpool. When these were received, we found that the lot brought out on the second trip to Tampico, and shipped from thence to Liverpool, and insured, as I have already said, for 36,500 dollars (equal

to £7,600 sterling), had, according to the account sales, been sold for £1,576 1s. 10d., and the charges upon it for freight, insurance, and commissions alone amounted to £560.

We had expected to see a high bill of charges, but this quite exceeded our calculations. But how the cotton, which was of a superior quality, had been sold for such a small sum—far below the market price—was what we could not understand. It seemed the more strange, as some small lots, which were shipped from Havana by Messrs. A. and Co. on our account to another firm in Liverpool, and sold about the same time, produced a very different and more favourable report, and when compared with the return from Messrs. G. and Co.'s correspondents, the net proceeds were just about three times the amount in proportion to the quantity of cotton.

Upon summing up the whole result of the three trips of the *Rob Roy*, we found that we came out just a little better than when we began. We had, no doubt, been lavish in our expenditure, personal and otherwise, but as that might be called a rule of the trade, it could not well be avoided. The disasters and losses in Texas on the first trip threw us much behind, and it took some time to make up the leeway.

On my own part, I found that I realized more from my wages and bonuses for my services as master than from any trade speculations, and I was just about that amount better in pocket than when I had sailed out of New Orleans two years before.

As to the trade in general, it is difficult to estimate what gains or losses accrued to those who invested in it in a business way. To those who ventured on a large scale in steamers, the enormous price of cotton, and the great demand for it, brought immense returns when the voyages were accomplished safely. On the other hand—leaving out altogether the risk of heavy loss in case of capture—the large amount of capital invested, and the great expense of working the business, was a considerable counterbalance. In the case of smaller ventures in schooners, there was less at stake, but the progress was slow, the voyages protracted, and attended with more risk and danger.

The class which I thought had the best side of the business,

in a pecuniary point of view, were the commission merchants, who acted as consignees, agents, and brokers, at both ends of the trip, who bought and sold the inward and outward cargoes, furnished stores, and did the general business on commission without risk or danger.

To those who took the active part, it was—although attended with some privation, danger, and anxiety—on the whole a rather enjoyable occupation, with something of the zest of yacht-racing—a kind of exciting sport of the higher order, in which the participators regarded with more satisfaction some successful elusion of the enemy, a chase and escape, or other adventure, than any other emolument.

THE END.

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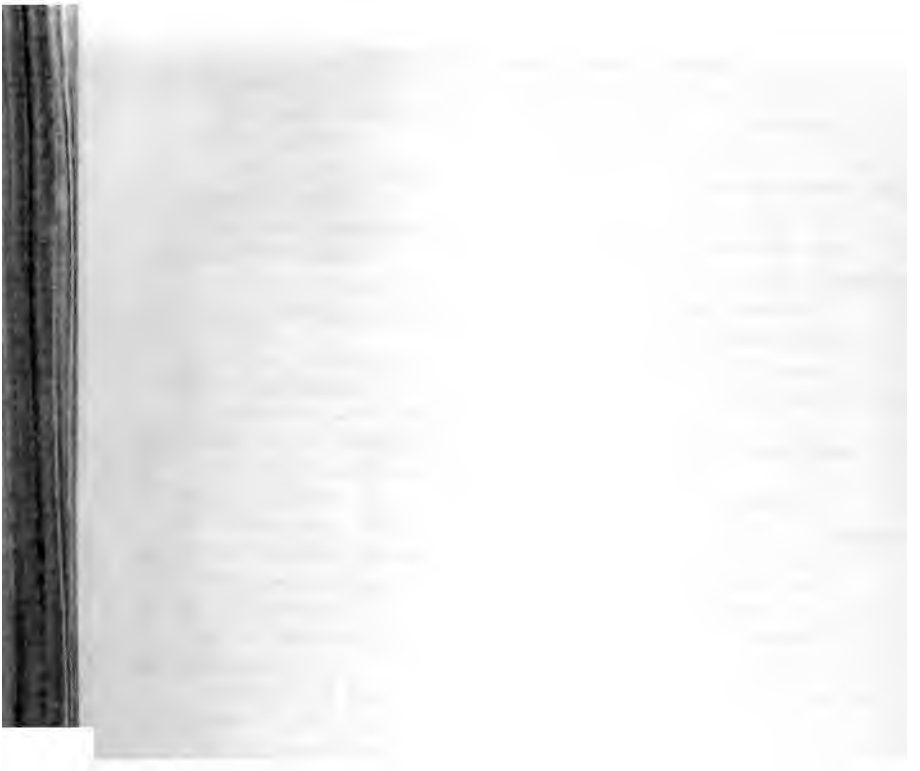
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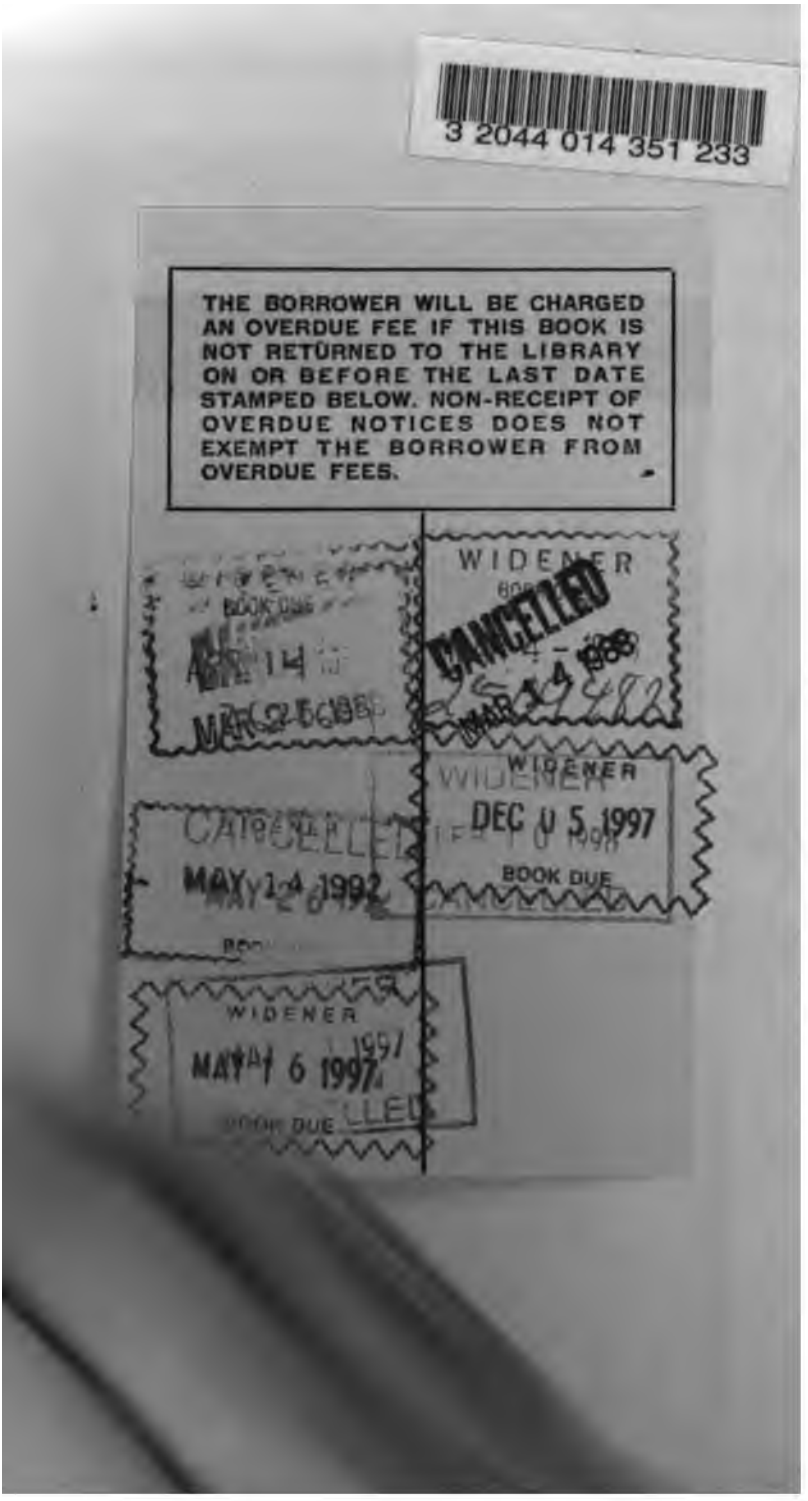
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